

ISLAND OF HOPE

*A Pacific Alternative
to Economic Globalisation*



**Report of the Churches' Conference on
Economic Globalisation — Island of Hope**

Mocambo Hotel, Nadi, Fiji
12–18 August, 2001

A WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES' PUBLICATION



PARTICIPANTS' LIST

Mr Richard Tatwin
Youth Coordinator
Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
PO Box 150
Port Vila
VANUATU
Tel: 678 - 22 722
Fax: 678 - 26 480
E-mail:
presbyterian@vanuatu.com.vu

Mr Feiloakitau Kalo Tevi
World Council of Churches
Programme Executive
International Relations
Pacific Desk
150, route de Ferney
PO Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2
SWITZERLAND
Tel: 41 22 791 6218
Fax: 41 22 788 0067
E-mail: fkt@wcc-coe.org

Ms Marise Pegat-Toquet Tobler
World Council of Churches
Justice, Peace and Creation
150, route de Ferney
PO Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2
SWITZERLAND
Tel: 41 22 791 6028
Fax: 41 22 791 64 09
E-mail: mpt@wcc-coe.org

Mr Tony Waworuntu
Executive Secretary
Christian Conference of Asia
96, 2nd District
Pak Tin Village
Mei Tin Road
Shatin, N.T.
HONG KONG
Tel: 852 2691 1068
Fax: 852 2692 4378
E-mail: tonycca@cca.org.hk



PROGRAMME

ISLAND OF HOPE — A PACIFIC
ALTERNATIVE TO ECONOMIC
GLOBALISATION

FRIDAY 17		THURSDAY 16	WEDNESDAY 15	TUESDAY 14	MONDAY 13	TIME	SUNDAY 12
Breakfast		Bible Study	Island of Hope Presentation	1. Trade 2. Environment	Opening Address & Keynote Speech	9.30-10.30	Opening Worship & Reception
Morning Worship		Drafting Committee (Others free)				08.30-9.30	
Coffee Break		Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	10.30-11.00	
Drafting Committee (Others free)		Regional Groups Discussions	Mixed Groups Discussions	WCC WARC CEC Orthodox Youth		11.00-12.30	
Lunch		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	12.30-14.00	
Endorsing Final Document		Reporting Plenary	3. Ethics & Regional Groups Discussions	Regional Groups Discussions	Regional Groups Discussions	14.00-15.30	Visits
Tea Break		Tea Break	Tea Break	Tea Break	Tea Break	15.30-16.00	
Closing		Regional Groups Discussions	Regional Groups Discussions	Regional Groups Discussions	Regional Groups Discussions	16.00-18.00	
Dinner		Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	18.00-20.00	
Cultural Evening		Reporting Plenary	Free	Cultural Evening		20.00-	

Arrival and
Registration

SATURDAY 11

Departure

206

SUNDAY 12

TIME

MONDAY 13

TUESDAY 14

WEDNESDAY 15

THURSDAY 16

FRIDAY 17

In Nadi, Fiji, from 12-16 August 2001, representatives of fifty-one churches, ecumenical and civil society organisations from twenty-nine countries came together at the World Council of Churches' *Global Conference on Economic Globalisation: The Island of Hope*.

The papers presented in this conference report share the following vision:

"Spirituality, family life, traditional economy, cultural values, mutual care and respect are components of the concept of the Island of Hope which prioritises relationships, celebrates quality of life and values human beings and creation over the production of things. The Island of Hope is an alternative to the project of economic globalisation which entails domination through an unjust economic system...."

ISLAND OF HOPE

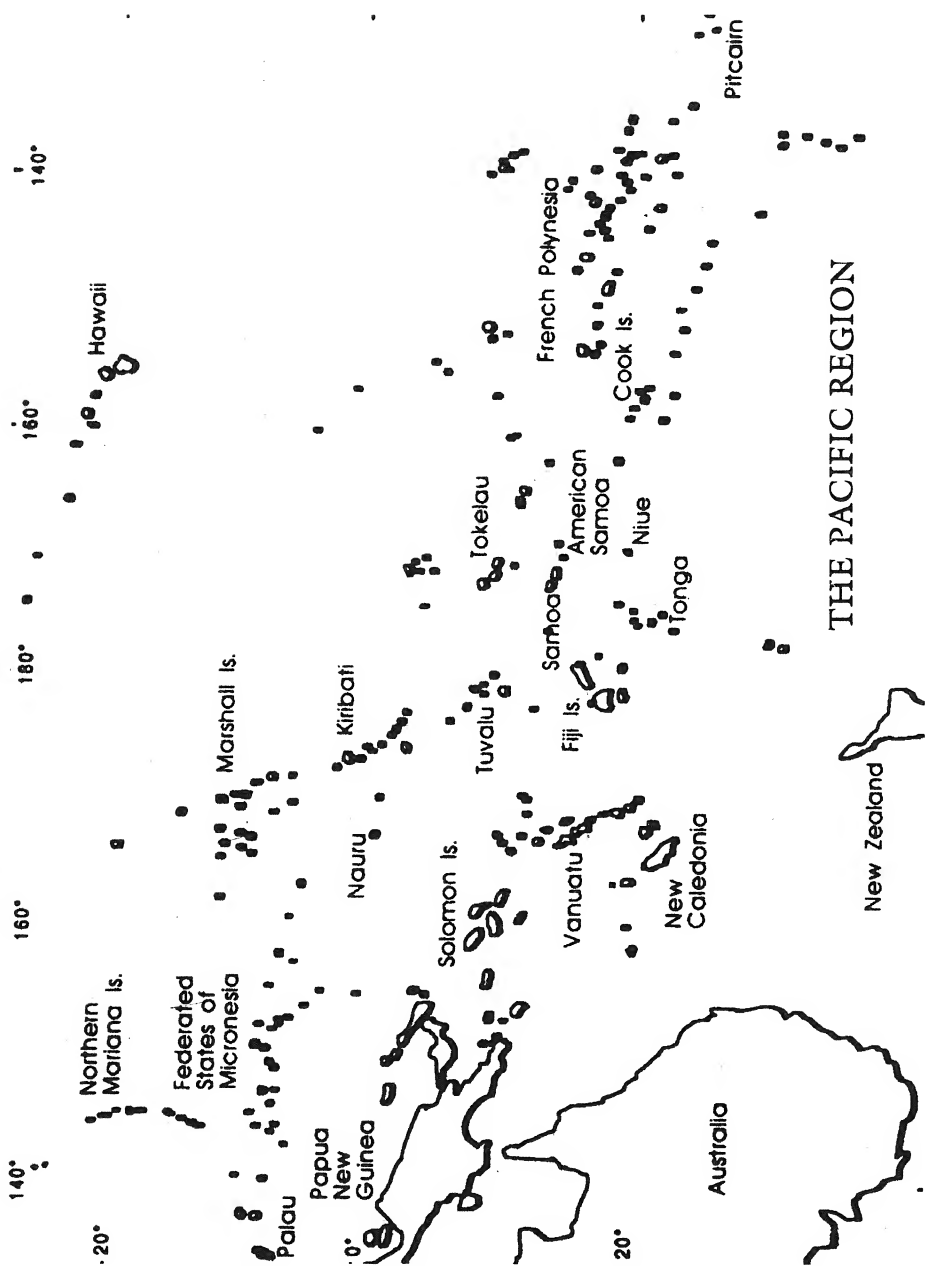
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A PUBLICATION OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES



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Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AoA	Agreement on Agriculture
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CCA	Clarity, Critique, Action (process)
CEC	Conference of European Churches
DNA	Chemical that carries genetic information
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation (of the UN)
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GATT	General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPS	Institute of Pacific Studies (of the University of the South Pacific)
JPIC	Justice Peace Integrity of Creation (Desk of WCC)
MNCs	Multi-national Corporations
NFIDCs	Net-Food Importing Developing Countries
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
ODA	Official Development Support
PCC	Pacific Conference of Churches
PCR	Programme to Combat Racism
PCRC	Pacific Concerns and Resource Centre
PNG	Papua New Guinea

Quad	US, Japan, the EU and Canada.
S&D	Special & Differential Treatment
TNCs	Trans-national Corporations
TRIPS	Agreement on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UR	Uruguay Round
USP	University of the South Pacific
VAT	Value Added Tax
WARC	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WB	World Bank
WCC	World Council of Churches
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II

Introduction

In March of 2001, the Pacific Desk, together with the Justice, Peace and Creation team of the World Council of Churches organised a meeting in Geneva to draft an outline of a response from the Pacific region on alternatives to Economic Globalisation. The result of this meeting was shared with the church leaders in a second consultation held in the Pacific during the month of May. In this meeting, the proposed document was entitled "Island of Hope, A Pacific Churches Response to Globalisation" and was subsequently endorsed by the church leaders.

The global ecumenical family was then invited to the Pacific region in August of 2001 to receive the Island of Hope as the contribution of the Pacific region to the global ecumenical process of identifying an alternative to the present economic system. This is the report of this landmark conference for the Pacific region. This conference is also an act of solidarity with a region that has often been marginalised and excluded as a result of its distant geographical location.

Why the Island of Hope? In its essence, the Island of Hope proposes a way of life that is in complete contrast to the way we live today. It is based on principles that do not exclude nor marginalise, and on values that are commonly found in the various Pacific cultures. Its strongest point is that the Island of Hope is visionary in its view of the future of the Pacific region. It is this vision that the Pacific Island Churches wish to share with the global ecumenical family.

The formulation of the Island of Hope is but a step in a process that operates at three levels: national, regional and international. At the national and regional levels, the next step is to translate this vision into action for the churches. In this regard, the Pacific Desk and the Economic Justice programme, in consultation with the Pacific

Conference of Churches, will be working closely together to take concrete steps towards implementing the concepts of the Island of Hope at the national and regional levels.

At the international level, the Island of Hope is one of the many regional contributions towards the formulation of an ecumenical alternative to economic globalisation. This process, headed by the Economic Justice programme of the Justice, Peace and Creation team will gather regional proposals on alternatives and will formulate an ecumenical alternative to economic globalisation to be presented at the next Assembly in 2006.

The Pacific Desk would like to take this opportunity to thank the Justice, Peace and Creation team, in particular Rogate Mshana, Martin Robra, Freddy Knutsen, and Marise Pegat-Toquet, for their support and the invaluable contributions to the success of the conference. An immense gratitude goes to Mrs. Morven Sidal for her commitment to ensuring that this report sees the light of day and within the deadlines suggested. Lastly, we would also like to acknowledge, with appreciation, the support of the General Secretary and staff of the Pacific Conference of Churches for the local arrangements and regional contributions.

Fe'iloakitau Kaho Tevi
Pacific Desk
June 2002.

Keynote Address

*Dr. Savenaca Siwatabau
Vice Chancellor of the
University of the South Pacific*

Madam chair, it is an honour and privilege to be among you and say a few words to such an important gathering, representing churches from around the world. There is no doubt in my mind that churches played and continue to play a critical role in influencing policies of our governments to ensure equitable sustainable development in our countries.

I wish to go back into history and discuss with you the forces that drive globalisation, not just from the world at large but from within our own countries.

In the early 1930s, we had a world depression. It started through the stock exchange in New York, with an over exuberance in activity and with share prices rising rapidly. It was further helped by the banking system, including the Federal Reserve Bank, offering easy credit and easy access to funds. People felt they were wealthy and could spend more money. Then the Federal Reserve became concerned and tightened money policy. It became more difficult for commercial banks to continue lending, so share prices started tumbling, people felt less wealthy and began cutting back on spending and consumption. The economy went down, government had less spending, all other countries of the world were engaging in tightening fiscal policies, cutting back expenditures, protecting their own jobs, raising barriers against trade, using duties etc. Unemployment increased globally, bringing about a lot of social difficulties during the 1930 depression.

The war came. In 1943 there was a feeling that the Allied Forces of USA, Great Britain etc., would win the war. Finance people held conferences in Bretton Woods, to propose a new world economic order following the war. The problems of early the 30s were fresh in their minds, and they saw a need to address job creation, and to open up trade with all our countries. This would increase production and so increase jobs— free trade would solve the problem. Capital could flow freely from one country to another, more investment, more competition, subjecting your own country's business to competition, so the prices would come down for your own consumers. It was seen as a world that did not support government and private monopolies. If government own a monopoly interest in for example, a bank, a government minister will make a decision on who gets a loan. In Fiji the government owned the National Bank of Fiji, and over the last 14 years the bank ignored all the basic rules of banking. Loans given without proper security, to influential people etc. The bank was guaranteed by the government. Ultimately it went broke. Government had to borrow \$250 million to make good what was lost, money that belonged to small depositors. Their money was given away by this bank. By the time they repay this loan it will cost the taxpayers over \$300million. Our poor and unemployed people will have to pay this loan, through eating and buying from the shops, paying indirect taxes. The \$300 million, would have funded schools, rural hospitals, social welfare, and investment to create jobs. We will not now have that money. So much depends on good governance in our countries, equity and concern for the weak in society.

The Bretton Woods Conference was to structure the world economic order. They decided on three important global institutions, one is the World Bank, formerly International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). Their first task was to repair the economies that had been destroyed during WWII. They began lending money to developing countries for projects. They set up international trade organizations to open up trade. Congress did not accept giving away too much power to an international body. This organization was 'still born'. Then they established GATT, and gradually and progressively opened up trade bodies. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was established to finance international trade. If a country imports and

exports by private business and government organization the country spends and earns foreign exchange (currency). If you earn less in exports than you spend in imports, then you have a deficit. If you earn more by exporting and tourism, or by loans in terms of foreign currency, you have a surplus (foreign exchange reserves). Importing more means your foreign exchange goes down, and if you run out you will be in the hands of foreign lenders. If foreign lenders say no, you cannot trade any more because you have a balance of payment problem. That has happened in many developing countries. The IMF asks everyone to contribute capital to the IMF, dependent on your economy. If you are large like USA your contribution will be in hard currency (gold) and will be large. If a country runs into a balance of payments problem, you will have to go to IMF who will offer to lend you some foreign currency from the collective pool, but on conditions. You have to behave yourselves! In a lot of cases, problems are self-imposed. Other times, countries are confronted with factors that are beyond their control and they get into the clutches of IMF and WB. These organizations say you have to cut back on government expenditure, and increase your taxes to cut your government's budget deficit. IMF has a lot of power over us. Some expenditure is very sensitive, like social services or investment to create jobs. There is some room for negotiation sometimes, the political forces are such, and powerful business people influence (lobby) to leave some category of expenditure alone.

We need powerful, well-organized voices to confront governments. These are the roles of NGOs and churches. Corporate tax is difficult to touch because businesses and employees in high-income levels will argue strongly. So they touch indirect tax such as Value Added Tax (VAT) which is indirect tax at the point of sale. A little tax on a commonly bought product generates a lot of income. NGOs need to keep at policy makers to keep these taxes down.

G7 countries are very powerful. They have collective voting power — more than 45% of IMF and World Bank out of approximately 180 countries. Before the Board meets the G7 will meet and what they decide is effectively accepted as policy by global organizations. Developing countries' interests are very diverse.

Attitude of donors: (this is not a values judgements, just an observation). The globalised world free flow of trade is good for industrialized countries in terms of capital, job creation etc. They admit there is inequality amongst and within countries, but they argue that if you have growth, wealth, you will have income tax to help government services. If you have good governance you will avoid waste. Jeffrey Saks has been working in Russia, South America and Poland, and he is not popular with World Bank. He says that the G5 and G7 countries want to rule the world on the cheap. Aid is not as fickle as it was. An option is to integrate your economy into the world organization, allow free trade and competition, then you will achieve investment and so growth and job creation.

That is the assumption. Sound domestic policy is the answer. Manage your budget well, good governance, good money policy, discipline, public sector reform, corporatisation, and privatization. That makes a bold assumption that we have a benevolent and wise government that is concerned for the well being of the people. They say it is better for the market to be price and quality determined and driven. Good and healthy businesses will grow. The market will allocate resources depending on what the ordinary people want. Government doesn't know what the people really want.

The forces that drive this process – information and communication technology. Trillions of dollars are moving across borders every day at the flick of the mouse as people play on the international stock exchange and invest money all around the world. Local banks will raise and lower their interest to meet that competition. We can shop globally through Internet. Production of goods – the components can be made in many different parts of the world according to skills and price of labour etc.

The impossible trinity (WB, IMF, WTO). The Secretary of the US Treasury, refers to the impossible trinity and the dilemma that faces us. If you want to capitalize on the benefits offered by the globalised world you have to give away a little bit of your soul – we have to have super-national bodies and organizations vested with rule-making and decision-making powers. We have our individual country laws, but once we have a global village we have to have rules that govern across international boundaries. Our countries are represented on these

governing bodies, but the powers are shifted from local to international bodies. Concerns about local cultural activities have to be sacrificed through integrating your economy into the global economy.

It is time now for countries to come together and address the issue of the impossibility trinity. To search for a new balance which might satisfy the global community. Some are not very interested in this proposal because they don't want change.

In our own countries we share some problems with other developing countries. Our past economic performances have not been very good. We have had payments problems emanating from bad governance, large budget deficits, no discipline, balance of payment problems. Economic growth rate has been lower than the population growth rate. Micronesia and Melanesia have a high population growth with a lot of young people falling out or coming out of our education systems and looking for jobs. In PNG there are 60,000 young people each year leaving school and looking for jobs. In good times they have 5,000–6,000 new jobs generated. The ability of the public sector to absorb these young people into the public sector is severely limited so we have big problems of unemployment amongst the young and it is getting worse every year. Social problems become political problems that are difficult to address. It is the same in the Solomon Islands. In Fiji 40,000 young people come out of school each year, and we can only create 2,000–4,000 jobs in good times. These young people have to look for micro and medium size businesses. This is a challenge for government and NGOs. We need more and more investment. In Fiji, Samoa, and PNG we don't have investor confidence in our economies because of factors like corruption in government. Overseas investors are interested in shipping their money out, not into our countries. There must also be confidence in investment by our own people.

Rising aspirations: everybody wants what is on TV, what they see when they travel to other parts of the world such as television sets, cars etc. These things are purchased with foreign exchange because they are produced overseas. So you must earn foreign exchange/capital investment or borrow it. Some countries have remittances – nationals who live abroad and send money back to the home country. This is aided and abetted by our politicians. In Fiji, starting from independence, there was an emphasis on living within our means,

rather than relying on aid funds, which raise the standard artificially, but the standard cannot be maintained without hooking into the world economy. Fiji exports and earns foreign exchange from sugar. Samoa and Solomon Islands export fish. Sugar employs about 22,000 farmers, so if you have five people in the farmer's family, that makes over 100,000 people dependent on the sugar industry. If they export more through more production or higher price, or our exchange increases sugar brings a lot of money into the country. The process of spending and re-spending generates income for more people. Exporting is important.

Aid; during the cold war era the Pacific was important to the super powers, who donated generous aid packages. Now things are changing – we now have to depend more on ourselves and adopt appropriate domestic policies. In the past a lot of aid money has been wasted, money was given without appropriate domestic policies in place to address the sensitivity and issues of the weak in society, and the money is wasted. Now we must rely on ourselves.

Adjustment reform programme; International organizations look for sound monetary policy. They look at the finance sector, the market and labour market. They look at trade policy, asking that we open it up, remove barriers to trade, remove licenses and duties to allow competition to come in. Banks open up to overseas banks to come in so money flows according to market forces; ensuring that we have financial stability, low inflation, stable balance of payments, sufficient foreign exchange reserves, economies are competitive, with increased sales and production. But the weakness is in our governments because they don't do the right things for the people. They are not sensitive to poor and needy.

Discussion

- Why did you start with the Depression rather than the process of colonialisation? The present day world-order is based on unjust division of labour consequent on colonialisation.
- We are far away from a stable exchange rate. Reducing a budget deficit involves reducing the area of operation of the public sector

through privatization. How does Fiji manage exchange control as this is a policy that many countries have abandoned? How do the fluctuating exchange rates in Asia affect Fiji?

- Are the institutions of WB IMF WTO super-national, international or transnational?
- What is good governance, for whom and for what?
- Where will the world economy be in the next ten or so years?

Presenter's Responses

- It is anybody's guess where the economy will be in ten years' time. We had oscillations beginning from the end of the last century up to World War I and a flow of capital to investment in North and South America. After WWI there was Karl Marx and Europe's economic problems, high inflation rates, interest in government's allocation of resources. In the 1970s there was another oscillation in thinking, opening up economies, role of capital, deregulation etc. Now there is globalisation. Some say the pendulum swing may decelerate and stop. There is visible unhappiness around the world as people are questioning globalisation, for example the problems of 1997-8 in Asia. A questioning balance is gathering momentum.
- On the wider issue of exchange rate, every year a team from IMF and World Bank visit our countries to talk with our Treasury Departments including a look at exchange rate movements. After the war IMF actually decided the rate, but since 1972 a lot of countries float their rates. A whole range of economic policies affect the exchange rate, such as balance of payments, fiscal policy, competitiveness of economy, etc. I presented a paper last year at a meeting of social welfare bodies in Asia and Pacific who wanted to discuss the role of NGOs in decision-making. Their argument was that when missions come from IMF and World Bank they talk to the treasury who are all economists. They believe the NGOs (churches, academia etc.) should talk to their governments so we can achieve the right solutions.
- Fiji has a fixed exchange rate system, tied to five other countries that are important in our trading relations with the world.

- One of the contributing factors to the problems in Asia was that capital accounts were opened up. If you have a balance of payment problems one of the favourite conditions for IMF and WB is to open up your capital account allowing free inflow and outflow of long and short term capital. Pre-conditions should be in place before you allow free flow of capital, but Asia's arms were twisted by IMF. Money was coming in, and stock prices and property values were rising. It was a bubble. Eventually inflation built up, and there were difficulties in balance of payments. Nepotism and corruption also existed. The outside investors initially assumed their money in SE Asia was secure. When they began to get nervous every one started withdrawing, and the money that had flowed in so freely began to flow out, creating problems for the banks who had loaned money for long terms. People also got nervous about the governments and they started pulling out. Short term external loans were too large compared to the country's foreign exchange reserves. When this short-term money started moving it was a certainty that the reserves would run out, resulting in devaluation of currency and increased inflation rate which discouraged investment. Costs got out of control, businesses failed, bringing unemployment and social problems.
- Article 6 of Articles of Agreement of IMF address capital flow — it is not the business of IMF, although IMF may encourage a country to stop capital outflow to protect it from being exposed. IMF has made a strong move to change that article to make capital flow its business. Developing countries are up in arms at the IMF's forcing of countries to open up their capital accounts. The G7 countries want all emerging economies in SE Asia to open up their capital accounts to allow free flow of capital.
- Super-national, international, transnational, it doesn't matter what you call them so long as you understand the power invested in them by our own governments who are members of these rule-making institutions. The voting powers depend on the size of the country.
- Good governance is defined as wise, sound management of national resources by those who are put in power by the people at

large through a democratic process, including the allocation of those resources in the interest of the people. Within that are issues of transparency, elimination of corruption, the role of media, and the role of the churches and NGOs in awareness raising and empowering the people to stand collectively against unacceptable government policies. An example of corporate governance is a statutory body like the National Bank of Fiji that lost money, and taxpayers had to pay.

- We could have started with colonialisation rather than the Depression, but I was considering the time available. The New World economic order wanted to ensure there would never be such a depression again.

Questions

- International rule-making is very exclusive. You talk about the group of 24 not being organized in terms of common purpose. What is emerging in international debate and process on organizing and mobilizing? Governments and finance institutions have a platform from which to make rules, but the people of the world struggle to establish such a platform. The powers-that-be describe social movements and protests as hooliganism and violence. What is a possible role for a social movement or counteraction against the international rule-making?
- The work of WTO is increasingly the 'commodification' of life. Bro. Meo presented it as 'individualism versus communalism'. How far can we stretch commodification, including exporting and importing of resources, human beings and even 'spare parts' of human beings? Are values and ethics emerging in the forces of globalisation?
- How do you correct competitiveness that excludes local people in third world countries, where, for example the final products may not be competitive and prices are not determined by those who produced the raw material?
- How is globalisation linked to the climate changes?

- What part would you like the IMF and World Bank to play in the development of this Pacific island called the Island of Hope?
- What is the relationship of democracy and IMF and WB?
- Is globalisation another name for the inequalities raised by the capitalistic system from beginning of 20th century?
- WWII was a result of conflict between world powers. The meeting in Bretton Wood was a way of trying to fix the game, but with the same intention of exploiting the world. We are still trying to play their game but we have changed some of the rules. How do we strike at this motive of exploitation?

Presenter's Responses

- *The exploitation at a global level and policy and law-making in our countries:*
In Fiji if the government considers changing our tax laws they will meet up with influential well-organized interest groups (businesses, unions etc). These groups will know what changes will suit them and they will work on the government. Churches and NGOs need to make people more aware. Governments sit on the global decision-making bodies, and they must take with them the important issues of their constituencies. But the same principle of 'might is right' is there, only more subtle. NGOs, churches, academia, and trade unions in developing countries have a role to play in changing the ethics of power. Your networking with them is a reservoir that should be tapped. Some elect their own executive directors, the rest they group themselves to have sufficient voting power to elect and direct collectively. Fiji is in the SE Asian voting group. These 20 executive directors try to make common decisions. If all developing countries converge, they have a weight of 50%.
- IMF/WB are only involved with Papua New Guinea. The Asian Development Bank holds the proxy for the rest of us.
- Democracy is an essential element of good governance in the interests of the ordinary people. Power corrupts. A lot of autocratic leaders shunt funds all around the world, and impoverish their countries.

- Countries can be controlled by the 'impossible trinity'. It is a balance; you have to sacrifice some power if you want the benefits. Some countries are still looking for the optimum balance.
- Colonialisation as just another extension of pre-independence globalisation. If you cannot change it collectively, then you have to accept it and move on. Singapore had communist powers all around them, but continued to trade with the rest of the world. Their new government wore white as a symbol of zero-tolerance of corruption. They said everyone must have a stake in the economy because then they will not trash it. They are now a net lender to WB and IMF. Barbados is an example of a well managed economy, political stability, and good governance; they don't go cap in hand to the WB and IMF.
- Disadvantages to globalisation; the fact that we now have skills (for example, in information technology) that flow freely around the world is a problem for developing countries. Industrialized countries are aging fast (they have a large percentage of old people who are not contributing to the economy), so to drive their economy they must have highly trained skilled people from the developing countries. International financial scams, international crime, money laundering, drugs — these are the minuses. A balance is extremely important.

Moderator

- How do we use the moral ethical confidence that we have in civil society to influence policy and decision making in our regional, local and international contexts? Or, is our own moral, ethical confidence up for sale and if so, to whom are we selling it?
- How do we strike a balance in proposing an alternative? We need to be aware of how the economy works and the forces behind globalisation in order to dialogue with and effectively influence our governments.
- Struggles for just political systems and issues of good governance are ongoing.

World Council of Churches

Dr. Agnes Auguom

I watched a BBC TV programme about migrants from North Africa moving into Europe between Europe and Spain, and a young man was asked why he was daring to go. He said, "I have to take a risk to die or take a risk to survive, for if I will not take a risk, I will die anyway." That was this young man's story as to why he was making the effort to cross despite the heavy barricades put up by the Spanish to stop migration into Europe.

I give this quotation to show how vulnerability is forcing people to take risks that involve their own lives. Globalisation is not a new phenomena *per se* although it has become a common in-house concept that denotes different things to different people depending on their power, interest and where they stand in relation to economic and political power.

In my view, coming from Africa, when you trace the period of slave trade, colonization and imperialism, to the current manifestation of globalisation, we have been experiencing globalisation at different levels for a long time. The problems arise in different ways and impact us in different ways. Economic globalisation is about progress, you are either in or out. If you want to progress you have got to be in, you have to play by the rules of the game. Those who don't play according to the rules are the losers. Others are trying to play by the rules but are still not able to be at the table. What is the role of WCC and the

ecumenical movements that have been relating to and working on issues of economic justice?

The ecumenical movement began way back in 1925 through the Work and Life Movement, which was addressing issues of justice, economic justice. The issues became pertinent as we came close to economic recession. The WCC in terms of ecumenical movement began to question the unjust economic order of the day that did not put people at the centre; that relegated people's lives secondary to profit. The basic foundation of and the premise upon which the ecumenical movement started to respond to economic issues and political injustices has been the gospel. The values of the gospel have been the basis the ecumenical movement has used. The Council came into being right from the period of the cold war, at the height of communism and capitalistic economics. I want to make this clear. The ecumenical movement has been accused by certain quarters (those that want to support an unjust economic order) of being a communist movement. No. It has been unequivocal in challenging both capitalist and communist structures. In 1978 the WCC conducted a study on the church of the poor. They surveyed, followed and critiqued the UN development decade, and put in place an advisory group on economic matters so it would help inform the ecumenical movement on the challenges that the current institutional arrangements raised. The 1978 group included theologians, economists, social scientists, etc., and they were looking at possible paradigms.

Having come to the close of the second decade of development that had failed, we experienced the oil crisis, and the concentration of economic power in the hands of a few people. At the end of the 1970s we were talking about an economy that had re-structured itself, with a concentration of power around 100 power centres, and out of those, 50 were transnational corporations. These corporations were a newly emerging feature of economic activities.

The WCC has, over the years, addressed issues of transnational corporations and injustice. The focus has been on justice and values that sustain life. In the Canberra Assembly, the presentation on economy focused heavily on values of justice, solidarity, and values that would sustain and promote social justice. There was a call to search for a new paradigm and a basic new orientation. For example,

that any economic institutional arrangement should bring people into focus as a central theme in the life of any economy. The centrality of people, an emphasis on people, meant:

- Meeting basic *needs* not *greeds* of people;
- Meeting the issues and participation of people;
- People in the centre of decision making and policy forming;
- Sustainability that the development decades of UN have never realized — communities and mother earth, the wholeness of life, self reliance.

In order that the paradigm shift, the ecumenical movement has accompanied people in their struggles all over the world against domination, colonialism, racism, marginalisation and exclusion. The WCC has been at the centre of accompanying with people that are struggling, people looking for alternatives to an oppressive and unjust struggle. Some of us have been part of that struggle in the search for a sustainable life, a participatory and just society.

The WCC and the ecumenical movement is committed to the search for an alternative paradigm. It does not believe there is only one way or approach to development. It believes in the fact that where there are marginalized people, struggling people, it is important, imperative to listen to their stories because therein lies also alternatives to the dominant paradigm we have, and knowledge about how to create viable alternatives.

In this framework the current process (which started in Harare) was to embark on engaging the churches in self-understanding of how the economic systems work and how they must participate. While the ecumenical movement is about global unity of the church, current globalisation does raise challenges to our understanding of globalisation. This is one of the first conferences on the churches' response and is part and parcel of the process which will continue as we journey together to challenge this notion that there is no alternative. We will create synergies between various church organizations. We have a moral and ethical confidence that can be used to rally around the various forces committed to a just and sustainable society.

World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)

Reverend S.W. Park

At its 23rd General Council, held in Debreen, Hungary in August 1997, WARC called for a committed process of recognition, education, confession and action regarding economic injustice and ecological destruction (*Processus Confessionis*). The Alliance urged its member churches at all levels and other communions as well as ecumenical organizations to take a confessional stand against economic injustice and ecological destruction.

In preparation for the General Council, the Alliance has had a series of regional consultations on the economic situation in different parts of the world. The following are the conclusion that all the regional consultations identified as fundamental problems of the current neo-liberal economic globalisation:

- Exclusive nature of neo-liberal globalisation;
- Erosion of nature/the earth;
- Colonization of consciousness;
- Idolization of the market;
- Promotion of mammonism;

People are made to serve the economy, not the economy serve the people. People are victimized by de-regulation. Neo-liberal economy is an upside down version of the original mandate and

meaning of economy. This confronts the Gospel, and the political economy of God.

In particular, the participants in the Kitwe Consultation urged the WARC to declare a *Status Confessionis* against the neo-liberal globalisation. The WARC General Council has seriously reflected on this proposal and came to a conclusion to initiate a process of recognition, education, and confession against the unjust economic system.

Why are Reformed Churches so keen on economic justice?

The Reformed theology has clear historical experiences of resistance against all forms of injustices, including economic injustice. In the 16th Century in Europe Calvin saw the potential danger of his own congregation when they began to accumulate wealth. Economic disparity within the community endangers the Body of Christ. His major concern was to keep the Body of Christ in shape, so Calvin disciplined his own congregation not to be involved in creating economic injustices. Then he developed a theology of economy to mould the Christian community.

Calvin's understanding of God's political economy	Neo-liberal economy
Inclusive	Exclusive
Protective economy of the poor	Protective economy of the rich
Flow of wealth from the rich to the poor	Flow of wealth from the poor to the rich
Economic index: 'Life in fullness of all'	Economic index: 'maximization of the profit'
Based on grace, love, people	Based on limitless competition and power
Solidarity economy	Dominant economy
Co-operative economy	Competitive economy
Community centred economy	Industrial centred economy

Based on this historical heritage, the Reformed Churches have witnessed to the liberating Gospel whenever salvation was at stake.

For example, in the face of the Third Reich of Germany, the confessing church in Germany formulated the Barmen Declaration. In the face of the apartheid system in South Africa, some member churches in South Africa has declared the *Status Confessionis* against racial discrimination. Asian and Latin American churches struggled against dictatorship in a confessional term.

In view of this Reformed theology, economic justice is not a matter of morality and choice. If it confronts the gospel we must respond in confessional term. The Alliance has called all churches to be engaged against economic injustice and destruction.

I wrote a document on theology of economic justice that has been given to you at this conference. WARC/WCC have a CCA approach, Clarity, Critique and Action process. What do we see? Why is it this way? What visions and variants emerge from the faith we confess?

Activities of WARC, CWF, CCA, CEC, CCAI, AACC:

Bangkok symposium – 1999
Budapest – 2001
Pacific - 2001
West Europe – 2002
Latin America – 2002
South-South in Africa – 2003
North America – 2003
CWF 2003
WARC 2004
WCC 2006

Conference of European Churches

*Mr Peter Pavlovic, Study Secretary
CEC Ecumenical Centre*

The Conference of European Churches (CEC) is a regional Christian ecumenical organization on the European continent. It has 128 member churches from most of the approximately 40 countries in the continent. An important feature of the Conference of European Churches is a good and valuable co-operation between churches of various church families: churches from Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and Old-Catholic traditions. There are three areas in which the CEC develops its activities: churches in dialogue, churches in solidarity and churches in society. The issue of globalisation is covered by the Commission for the Church and Society.

There are four themes among the CEC activities related to the issue of globalisation which are worthy of mention:

1. Social issues

We have to face a very complex social situation in Europe. In spite of general and statistical prosperity, not everybody living in our continent is rich. It is possible to go even further and say that in spite of general richness and profit not everybody in our continent is enjoying decent living conditions. There are a number of people who do not have a share in prosperity and number of those who live, even in a generally rich society, in need and even despair. To those belong

not only the unemployed and poor, but an increasing number of migrants from other continents coming to economically prosperous European countries. Migration and related topics is an important theme in our continent.

The other important feature of Europe is the fact that the continent has been for about half a century split between prosperous West and poor East. A totalitarian communist regime did not allow the full potential of the Central and Eastern European countries to develop. Today a big theme in the continent is a certain sort of unification. It has to be mentioned that for people in Central and Eastern Europe there are many positive aspects which globalisation brings: access to the global markets, possibility of global communication, travelling possibilities etc. The question however is, what does this process mean for people, for their daily life, for their living conditions? It is a big working theme for us, for churches. These facts are directly related to the process of economic globalisation. On the one hand, impressive foreign investments can increase the general economic potential of an individual country. On the other hand the process has serious social consequences. The most crucial and visible are increasing migration with all its related benefits and problems, and an increasing gap between the rich and poor, between the wealth of one part of society and the despair of the other part.

2. Care for environment

Care for the created world, for nature and environment is the other important part of our mission. CEC initiated a European Christian environmental network, which brings together people active in this area from the churches all over the continent. The CEC plays an active part in it. The main themes discussed in the network include climate change, dealing with natural resources and energy. We know that resources are not unlimited. We call for efficiency and proper stewardship in dealing with those resources, which are at our disposal. In this work our activities can be seen along two main lines. On the one hand we try to influence the situation in our churches: to provide support for grassroots activities and as well support in creation and establishing of links between them. On the other hand our effort leads to those who bear political responsibility. Europe in political

terms has been an active player in negotiation around the Kyoto protocol and, as is known, Europe very much opposed the last negative attitude to the protocol from the U.S. government.

We are active in area of climate change. An important part of our agenda in this respect is recognition that Europe as an industrialized continent with a big share of atmospheric depletion, has a responsibility to work actively in this field. To acknowledge its share of the current situation, to accept responsibility for it and work actively together with others on correction of the negative trends. There is an important recognition that the atmosphere of the earth is indivisible. It is constantly changing and moving. We cannot keep it, nor can we hold it or own it. Damage of one part of it can have a serious consequence thousands and thousands of kilometres away. We have to keep in mind that irresponsible acting in Europe can negatively influence life in many distant countries such as the Pacific islands.

3. Sustainable development

Dealing with care for environment and climate change are inseparably related to the issue of sustainable development. Sustainable development means for us a triangle in which economy, ecology and social issues are deeply connected. To meaningfully discuss the concept of sustainable development means for us:

- To take into equal consideration all three pillars on which stands the idea of sustainable society: economy, ecology and social issues;
- To recognise their interrelationship and mutual conditionality:
 - Sustainable society, not material prosperity and neglecting of others;
 - Not irresponsible behaviour to the atmosphere on account of others;
 - Not wasting of natural resources and forgetting those who will come after us.

These are our aims as we work in this area. An important aspect is the issue of local sustainability.

The background idea and the bottom-line question is: is the paradigm of constant economic growth reconcilable with the concept of sustainable development? These questions have been addressed in

the basic documents, which has been produced by the CEC in the recent period of time.

4. Civil society

The issue of civil society has an increasing importance in the European context. Undoubtedly it also has relevance to the topic of globalisation. The questions which need to be raised are:

- What role can NGOs and churches in society play?
- Whom is civil society representing?
- What are the responsibilities of various actors in civil society, and,
- The bottom-line issue of the relation between representative and participatory democracy.

The CEC is currently working intensively in this area in order to bring more clarity to the issue, which has crucial importance for the understanding of the basic aspects of globalisation and the role of churches in it.

5. Activities

- Conference on impacts of globalisation in Central and Eastern Europe organized jointly by WCC, WARC and CEC several weeks ago;
- Preparation of a similar conference (jointly with WCC, WARC and other organizations), which will focus its interest on the situation in Western Europe, particularly taking into account negative aspects of financial markets;
- Preparation of seminars on local sustainability and concentration on the problems of agriculture and rural communities;
- Preparation for Rio+10 Earth summit in 2002 in South Africa;
- Raising issue of consumerism and its relation to the topic of globalisation.

The Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church

Adopted by the Council of Bishops
in August 2000

Fr. Vsevolod Chaplin

In the 20th century, multilateral interstate agreements resulted in the establishment of a comprehensive system of international law obligatory for signatories of its conventions. There are also international organisations whose resolutions are obligatory for their member states. Some of these organisations have powers delegated to them by governments to be exercised in economic, political and military activities and applied not only in international relations but also the internal life of nations. Legal and political regionalisation and globalisation are becoming a reality.

On the one hand, the development of interstate relations in this direction helps to intensify commercial, industrial, military, political and other cooperation — the necessity dictated by the natural intensification of international relations and the need for a common response to the global challenges of time. In the history of Orthodoxy, there are examples of the positive influence made by the Church on the development of regional interstate relations. International organisations help to settle various disputes and conflicts. On the other

hand, the danger of differences that may emerge between people's will and international organisations' decisions should not be underestimated. These organisations may become instruments for the unfair domination of strong over weak countries, rich over poor, the technologically and informationally developed over the rest. They also may practice double standards by applying international law in the interests of more influential states.

All this compels the Orthodox Church to take a critical and careful approach to the legal and political internalisation, calling the powers-that-be, both on national and international levels, to utter responsibility. Any decision involved in concluding a fateful international treaty and defining the country's stand within an international organisation should be made in accordance with the will of the people, fully and objectively informed of the nature and consequences of the decisions planned. In implementing a policy obligatory by an international agreement or action of an international organisation, governments should maintain the spiritual, cultural and other identity of their countries and nations and the legitimate interests of their states. Within international organisations themselves, it is necessary to ensure the equality of sovereign states in access to decision-making and in the right of casting vote, especially in defining basic international standards. Conflict situations and disputes should be resolved only with the participation and consent of all the parties whose vital interests are involved in every particular case. The adoption of compulsory decisions without consent of a state to be directly affected appears possible only in case of an aggression or massacre within this country.

Keeping in mind the need to exert spiritual and moral influence on the actions of political leaders, to cooperate with them, to show concern for the needs of people and individuals, the Church enters into dialogue and cooperation with international organisations. Within this process, she invariably shows her conviction in the absolute importance of faith and spirituality for human work, decisions and laws.

The globalisation has not only political and legal, but also economic and cultural-informational dimensions. In economy, it is manifested in the emergence of transnational corporations, which have accumulated considerable material and financial resources and have employed an enormous number of people in various countries.

Those standing at the head of international economic and financial structures have concentrated in their hands a great power beyond the control of nations and even governments and beyond any limit, be it a national border, an ethnic and cultural identity or the need for ecological and demographical sustainability. Sometimes they refuse to reckon with the customs and religious traditions of the nations involved in the implementation of their plans. The Church cannot but be concerned also for the practice of financial speculations obliterating the dependence of income on the effort spent. Among various forms of this speculation are 'financial pyramids,' the collapse of which causes large-scale upheaval. In general, such changes in economy result in the loss of priority that labour and man have over capital and means of production.

In the field of culture and information, the globalisation has been conditioned by the development of technologies facilitating the movement of people and objects and the acquisition and distribution of information. Societies, which were separated earlier by distances and borders and therefore predominantly homogeneous, now come in touch easily and become multicultural. This process, however, has been accompanied by attempts to establish the dominion of the rich elite over the rest of the people and of some cultures and worldviews over others, which is especially intolerable in the religious field. As a result, there is a tendency to present as the only possibility a universal culture devoid of any spirituality and based on the freedom of the fallen man, unrestricted in anything, as the absolute value and measure-stick of the truth. The globalisation developing in this way is compared by many in Christendom to the construction of the Tower of Babel.

While recognising the globalisation as inevitable and natural and in many ways facilitating people's communication, dissemination of information and more effective production and enterprise, the Church points to the internal contradictions of these processes and to their threats. Firstly, globalisation begins to change, along with the conventional ways of organising production, the conventional ways of organising society and exercising power. Secondly, many positive fruits of globalisation are available only to nations comprising a smaller part of humanity, but having a similar economic and political system. Other nations, to whom five sixths of the global population belong, have

found themselves on the margins of the world civilization. They have been caught in debt dependence on financiers in a few industrial countries and cannot create dignified living conditions for themselves. Discontent and disillusionment are growing among them.

The Church raises the question concerning the need to establish comprehensive control over transnational corporations and the processes taking place in the financial sector of economy. This control, aimed to subject any entrepreneurial and financial activity to the interests of man and people, should be exercised through all mechanisms available in society and state.

The spiritual and cultural expansion fraught with total unification should be opposed through the joint efforts of the Church, state structures, civil society and international organisations for the sake of asserting in the world a truly equitable and mutually enriching cultural and informational exchange combined with efforts to protect the identity of nations and other human communities. One of the ways to do it is to ensure for countries and nations an access to basic technological resources which will enable them to disseminate and receive information on the global scale. The Church reminds us that many national cultures have Christian roots. The followers of Christ therefore are called to promote the interconnectedness of the faith and the cultural heritage of nations, opposing resolutely any manifestations of anti-culture and commercialisation of the space allocated to information and arts.

Generally, the challenge of globalisation demands that contemporary society should give an appropriate response based on concern for the peaceful and dignified life for all people and combined with efforts for their spiritual perfection. In addition, efforts should be made to achieve such a world order which would be based on the principles of justice and the equality of people before God and exclude any suppression of their will by the centres of political, economic and informational influence.

The contemporary international legal system is based on the priority given to the interests of the earthly life of man and human communities over religious values (especially in those cases when the former and the latter come into conflict). This priority is sealed in the national legislation of many countries. It is often built in the principles

regulating various activities of the governmental bodies, public educational system, etc. Many influential public mechanisms use the same principle in their open confrontation with faith and the Church, aimed to oust them from public life. These manifestations create a general picture of the secularisation of public and social life.

While respecting the worldview of non-religious people and their right to influence social processes, the Church cannot favour a world order that puts in the centre of everything the human personality darkened by sin. This is why, invariably open to co-operation with people of non-religious convictions, the Church seeks to assert Christian values in the process of decision-making on the most important public issues both on national and international levels. She strives for the recognition of the legality of religious worldview as a basis for socially significant action (including those taken by state) and as an essential factor which should influence the development (amendment) of international law and the work of international organisations.

Global Trade and the WTO

Jacques-Chai Chomothongdi

(Jacques-Chai Chomothongdi represents Focus on the Global South – A Program of Development Policy Research, Analysis and Action.)

In recent years, “trade liberalisation” has again emerged as a magic solution to problems which are confronted by developing countries. This time, “trade liberalisation” has not only been portrayed as good for the economic growth but also good for the poor. As President George W Bush, during his speech at the World Bank headquarters before leaving for the G8 summit in Genoa, more firmly than ever stated, “Trade is good for the poor and [therefore] those who are against trade liberalisation are no friend to the poor.” This notion of how international trade will bring prosperity to the Third World, hence help alleviate poverty, strangely come from the elite in the North, while most of the people in the South seem to be more sceptical regarding this notion. This is probably another effort by the United States (US), the European Union (EU) and the World trade organisation (WTO) secretariat itself to push for further liberalisation, especially regarding the push for the new trade round at the next WTO ministerial meeting in Doha, Qatar later this year.

There is a remarkable consensus among senior officials of the WTO, IMF, World Bank and other international financial agencies including political leaders and policymakers in many countries on the imperative of global economic integration. For these people:

Openness to trade and investment flows is no longer

viewed simply as a component of a country's development strategy; it has mutated into the most potent catalyst for economic growth known to humanity.¹

Joining the world economy, however, is no longer a matter simply of dismantling barriers to trade and investment. Countries now must also comply with a long list of admission requirements, from new patent rules to more rigorous banking standards. This trend is bad news for the world's poor. By focusing on international integration, governments in poor nations have to divert human resources, administrative capabilities, and political capital away from more urgent development priorities such as education, public health, industrial capacity, and social cohesion. World Bank trade economist Michael Finger has estimated that a typical developing country must spend \$150 millions US to implement requirements under just three WTO agreements (those on customs valuation, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and trade-related intellectual property rights). As Finger notes, this sum equals a year's development budget for many least-developed countries. And while the budgetary burden of implementing financial codes and standards has never been fully estimated, it undoubtedly entails a substantial diversion of fiscal and human resources as well.

So did developing countries experience economic growth and prosperity after paying for such high cost? Evidences seem to indicate the opposite. Average trade deficit in the 1990s for developing countries (excluding China) was higher than in the 1970s by 3 percentage points of GDP while the average growth rate was lower by 2 percentage points. Hence, Dani Rodrik, Professor of International Political Economy at Harvard University, notes that:

...neither economic theory nor empirical evidence guarantees that deep trade liberalisation will deliver higher economic growth. Economic openness and all its accoutrements do not deserve the priority they typically receive in the development strategies pushed by leading multilateral organisations.²

In fact, integration into international trade is not a recent experience for developing countries. In the colonial period, they had related to the world market mainly as exporters of raw materials while importing manufactures. This division of labour is still prevalent, with the declining term of trade against developing countries, particularly in recent years. According to UN data, the term of trade of non-fuel commodities *vis-à-vis* manufactures between 1980 and 1992 fell by 52 per cent. Trade and development report, 1999, shows that income losses were greater in the 1990's than in the 1980's not only because of larger term of trade losses, but also because of the increased shared of trade in GDP due to trade liberalisation.

For the multilateral institutions, which based their faith on the neo-liberal economic model, foreign capital has been seen as central to Third world development. Thus, trade liberalisation as the way to boost export earning has been pushed and imposed upon many developing countries under these institution influences. For countries that do follow this track, few may experience economic growth. However, in pursuing the export path to growth, two processes usually take place. One, environmental resources are often over-utilised in order to obtain the cheapest, most competitive prices. Two, human resources are abused likewise. For instance the exploitation of cheap female labour in export-oriented industry.

Some studies have shown that for \$1 US earned in exports, up to \$10 US of costs are borne by the locals. Whatever the exact figures, the point is that in the race to the bottom (of prices) in an increasingly competitive global market, the south is exporting away its environmental, natural, and human resources at below cost. The burden –environmental and social costs – are left to local communities to deal with. Small wonders that this type of economic globalisation leads to the marginalization of some sectors of society.

Small Farmers and the Global Trade

Let me show to you the concrete impact of the existing global trade regime on the disadvantages by looking at the experience of small-scale farmers in developing countries. In developing countries, agriculture continues to be the main source of employment, livelihood

and income for between 50 to 90 per cent of the population. Of this percentage, small farmers make up the majority, up to 70 to 95 per cent of the farming population. Small farmers are, therefore, a significant proportion of the population.

Since the 1980s, close to 100 countries that faced the economic crisis resulting from the oil crisis have been forced to take on structural adjustment packages. The policies included on the one hand forced liberalisation, and on the other, the conversion of domestic agricultural production for exports. Farmers in these countries have been pressured to switch from diverse traditional poly-cultures to mono-cultures for overseas markets. Which also means higher cost to operate since this type of production requires higher input such as chemical fertilisers, pesticides, water, as well as the increasing use of machines. This market-oriented farming system, thus, increases the farmers' need for credit to finance each production cycle. Consequently, small farmers (who would operate at higher cost per unit in this capital-intensive method but have more difficulties in access to finance) have been marginalised.

Water overuse

This industrial agricultural method is already creating serious water shortages in various countries today. Besides constraining future food supply, groundwater over-pumping is widening the income gap between the rich and poor. The poor simply cannot afford to deepen their wells or buy stronger pumps. As the shallower wells dry up, some of the small-scale poorer farmers end up renting their land to the larger well owners and become labours on these larger farms.

Chemicals problem

Estimates of pesticide poisoning in the Third world are as high as 25 millions people yearly. Many industrialised countries continue to export chemicals that are deemed too deadly for domestic use. Between 1992 and 1996, US chemical companies increased exports of domestically prohibited pesticides by 18 per cent.

With export orientation and trade liberalisation policies, the commodity chain has broadened. As a result, farmers become small players among the big trans-national seed, chemical, export, processing, shipping and retailing companies. This has drastically cut down the

returns accruing to farmers, as well as the control farmers have over the prices they get. While the farm-gate prices paid to farmers have been on the decline in recent years, there has been no or little decline in consumer prices. Where is the consumer dollar going and who receives the bulk of it?

Clearly, small farmers are being squeezed hard while the exporters and transnational corporations carrying out the processing and retailing are making a disproportionate amount of profits in the commodity chain. It is therefore small wonder that for developing countries, food production for exports has not brought in the revenues expected, especially as pre and post farm-gate operations are dominated by corporations from the industrial countries. In addition, developing countries are constrained from entering into higher value processing of their commodities (post farm-gate processing) due to the tariff structure and tariff escalation in developed countries. As Ambassador Rana of Kenya pointed out at a discussion on the WTO, Kenya can easily export raw coffee beans to the North but as soon as Kenya processes its coffee beans, markets are closed because tariffs rates are impossibly high.

As discussed above, the industrialisation and export orientation of agriculture has not benefited them (small farmers). In the globalised market, the small players have been marginalised. Yet economically, they should not be ignored. Policies which have led to their marginalisation has meant the continuation of the vicious cycle of poverty for sectors of society, highly uneven development and hence the inability of many developing countries to attain satisfactory levels of overall development.

Conroy, Murray and Rosset (1996) write about how many developing countries cannot achieve a satisfactory level of development because their small farmers have been sidelined:

It is our belief, and that of respected economists (Janvry 1981) and Jeffrey Sachs (1987), that the sort of inequity and poverty the peasantry must face actually blocks true development. The rural masses are so poor that they have little purchasing power. They thus do not constitute an important market for domestic industry. This in turn means that domestic markets are too small to stimulate

much economic activity, so production is largely directed toward foreign markets and urban elite. Consequently, the level of demand in the economy is too narrow to sustain broad based, effective development. This creates a high degree of dependence on foreign markets and a lack of structural incentives (nationally, that can bring about) better living standards for the poor. In short, poverty becomes a vicious circle that is itself an obstacle to development.³

The World Trade Organization (WTO)

It is impossible not to look at the WTO and its agreements in order to understand the current global trade system and how it marginalises the poor around the world.

The WTO was established in January 1995, as a culmination of the Uruguay Round (UR) of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), which lasted from 1986 to 1994. The WTO is in effect, an extension of the structural adjustment policies institutionalised in the developing countries by the World Bank and the IMF in the 1980s. The WTO institutionalises a version of “free trade” that is defined by providing producers from rich, northern industrialised countries more access to markets in the south for their manufactured products (including food) and services, and continuing access to necessary raw materials in order to strengthen the production capacities of their own producers and corporations.

Institutional Structure and Decision Making

The WTO, from the experiences of many developing and least-developed countries, is a highly unequal and un-egalitarian institution. Decision making in the WTO is not by one-country-one vote, but by a new form of coercion, called “consensus”

Ordinarily, consensus implies that all members can, on an equal footing, with equal advantages and with equal rights and privileges, negotiate issues towards a resolution that is acceptable to all members.

In reality, however, consensus in the WTO is managed by 4 countries (also called the Quad): the US, Japan, the EU and Canada. These countries control decision making by applying pressure on the other members through informal caucus meetings and making deals. Rarely are details of agreements or implementations discussed and negotiated in formal plenary sessions. Rather, agreements and proposals are hammered out in exclusive back-room sessions, which are then presented to the other members as done deeds.

Often, the big trading powers have small meetings, many of which are simultaneously organised, without openness or transparency. Also, poorer countries do not have the research capacity to properly analyse new agreements or amendments. As a results, they either accept resolutions in good faith, or because they simply have no choice.

Agreement on Agriculture (AoA)

The AoA was negotiated in 1994 under GATT and came into effect through the WTO in 1995. The main provisions of AoA fall into the following three categories:

1). Market access

Import quotas would be transformed into tariff (tariffication), and these tariffs would be reduced over a 6-year period by an average of 31 per cent compared with tariff equivalents in 1986–88.

Countries would pledge to allow a certain level of agricultural imports (minimum access volumes) that would start at 3 per cent of 1986–88 consumption and rise to 5 per cent

2). Export competition

Export subsidies would be reduced by 36 per cent over a 6-year period in total cash value. New subsidies would not be introduced, or old subsidies expanded beyond the level reached after the 6-year period.

3). Domestic support

Domestic supports for agriculture, including subsidies for production and distribution (Aggregate Measure of Support), would be reduced over a 6 year period to 20 per cent less than what these supports were in 1986 – 1988. This does not, however,

include the direct income payments made to farmers in the US and some European countries for controlling the amount of production.

Developing countries and least-developed countries would be subject to two-third of the cut in tariffs, domestic support and export subsidies applied to developed countries under the "Special & Differential Treatment" (S&D) given to them under GATT; also, they would be given a grace period of 10 years instead of 6 years to put these cut into effect.

Yet many commentators note that in agriculture, there seem to be more S&D provisions for the rich than the poor. The AoA has several "boxes" — areas exempt from reduction commitments because of their importance for particular social or environmental objectives. The "green box" contains policies that affect both developed and developing countries although it lists spending exemptions and so excludes countries that do not have revenue to invest in agriculture. The "blue box", which exempts deficiency payments to farmers based on their acreage or per head of livestock, was entirely for the benefit of the US and the EU, which remains heavily dependent on these measures in the implementation of their agricultural policies. In contrast, the actual S&D provisions (for developing countries) have failed to offer the flexibility needed.

Export subsidies cause other exporters to face stiffer competition as the prices of their goods are driven down. Therefore, countries, which can afford to subsidise exports, take market away from more efficient, low cost producers. Most detrimental is that unequal competition destroys the agricultural sector in developing countries.

The export subsidies, therefore, was the central issue in the agriculture negotiations of the UR. It took the EU a long time to finally agree to disciplines in this area. However, it is important to note that disciplines in export subsidy also mean the continued legitimisation and existence of dumping.

In fact, OECD figures show that instead of decreasing under the WTO regime, the overall agricultural subsidisation has increased tremendously, from around US\$ 182 billion in 1995 to US\$ 362 billion in 1998. This was three time the Official Development Support (ODA) and twice the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to developing countries

in the same year. The major share of these subsidies are accounted for by the US and the EU.

In contrast, most farmers in developing countries have experienced decreasing governmental support. Most developing countries simply do not have the resources to provide the range and extent of domestic supports that developed countries do. Where such supports exist they do not even reach level permitted by the AoA, at 10 per cent of the total value of the production. However, farmers in developing countries will bear the brunt of adjustments to new agricultural trade regime since developing countries have already opened up their market to cheaper (subsidised), products from richer countries.

Contrary to what developing countries had expected. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), growth in agricultural exports in the period from 1990 to 1997 was 3.05 per cent per annum for developed countries and, only 0.63 per cent per annum for developing countries. On the other hand, annual growth in agriculture imports during the same period was 1.85 per cent for developed and 3.87 per cent for developing countries.

Regarding Net-Food Importing Developing Countries (NFIDCs), the argument that is often cited in favour of agricultural liberalisation and cheap subsidised imports is that it serves the needs of the poor and meets their food security needs at relatively low cost. This may be true in short term. In long term, however, it runs the risk of:

1. Firstly, cheap food imports destroy the agricultural production base of developing countries since these countries are not able to compete with subsidised imports. Imported food is available but the assumption made is that countries will have the foreign exchange to purchase food, and also those individuals in these countries will have the money on hand to purchase what they need. For many developing countries, this is often not the case.
2. Many developing countries will then find themselves in the position whereby they have to borrow money in order to pay for food. That is, ensuring their food supply means incurring debt and aggravating balance of payment problems.

3. In large agrarian economies, farmers that are squeezed out due to imported food products are not likely to easily find new jobs. Hence importation of food will most likely also mean the importation of unemployment.

The Indonesian case

Indonesia as it is today, is an example of a country, that had become highly dependent on imports even of its staple, rice. At the time of the economic crisis, which started in 1997, Indonesia found that the financial and industrial sector it had been depending on melted away as quickly and easily as its currency had plunged. With its agriculture sector in disarray due to years of governmental neglect, the Indonesians today find themselves with insufficient locally produced food to meet their needs. According to the World Bank report, an additional 21 million people fell under the poverty line and face serious hunger problem in only a period less than two year after the crisis has started.

Today in Southeast Asia, large numbers have returned to farming and there has been a general reawakening of the importance of food self-sufficiency. There is a new realisation of vulnerability as a result of over-dependence on imported foods and a realisation of the fragility of the financial and industrial sectors. The Indonesian government, for example, has made food self-sufficiency a policy.

Agreement on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs)

Introduced in the WTO in 1995, the TRIPs agreement mandates protection of intellectual property for manufactured products and production processes through patents and copyrights. This coverage includes a wide range of products and processes, from semi-conductors to pharmaceuticals, micro-organisms and microbiological transformations.

The TRIPs agreement is in the interests of large companies engaged in research and development. It is very problematic for developing countries who not only lack the economic and human resource capacity to do original researches, but also, who have not

used patenting as a widespread legal form of ownership to begin with. About 95 per cent of all patents in the world today are held in industrialised countries, with more than half of all royalties going to the US.

The TRIPs agreement has serious consequences for industrial, agricultural and natural resource capabilities of Southern countries. Through TRIPs, leading industrialised countries of the north can greatly influence the pace and quality of technological development and economic well being in Southern countries. TRIPs also emphasise the privatisation of collective knowledge and innovation about natural resources, agricultural products and processes.

This leads us to the problem area of the patent for biotechnology and genetically engineered and modified organisms. Northern companies are claiming patents on genetic materials, biological varieties, knowledge and production processes which originate in developing countries and are often results of generations of communal technological innovation. Through TRIPs, not only will countries have to pay royalties on patents of their own indigenous intellectual and biological properties, but also, there is no mechanism by which these countries and local communities – the real inventors – might obtain a share of profits. Today, a company or researcher can collect a local/indigenous plant from a developing country, isolates a gene or useful property, and patent a new plant, without making any payments to the communities whose knowledge enabled the original plant to be identified, and often times to be nurtured.

The application of TRIPs to pharmaceuticals has been a significant blow to developing countries and the poor. For example, in the US, people who are infected with the HIV virus can now have their lives extended indefinitely through a combination of drugs known as AIDS cocktails. The cost of these drugs is \$10,000 US to \$15,000 US a year – placing them far out of reach of 33 million people in low-income countries, including 25 million in Sub-Saharan Africa, who need them. But the cost of producing these drugs is a tiny fraction of their prices. An Indian generic drug manufacturer, Cipla, recently offered to provide the drugs to governments for \$600 US and to NGOs for \$350 US. For million of people these drugs would become affordable. But the pharmaceutical companies are adamant. “They

are stealing my intellectual property, and I cannot accept that,” said a top Merck official. The cost in human life could be very high if they decide to drag their feet, demand other concessions, change their prices, or otherwise abuse their God-like power over the lives of millions. From a strictly economic point of view, a patent monopoly is a very inferior means of financing research. A basic principle of standard microeconomic is that the price of good should be equal to the cost of producing an additional unit. Monopoly pricing, especially at 15 or 20 times the cost of production — is enormously wasteful and inefficient. And in the case of essential medicines, the toll of this inefficiency, which resulted from the TRIPs agreement, is measured in human lives.

General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)

The GATS agreement establishes a multilateral framework of principles and rules for all forms of trade in all services, from telecommunications, to public services like water delivery and health care.

One of the most fundamental issues to be discussed in the negotiation is that of ‘domestic regulation’. Disciplines on domestic regulation may threaten governments’ duty to protect their citizens from harmful effects of trade or foreign investment. So how can host countries share equitable benefit from foreign investments?

On the other hand, some of the key principles that underlie the GATS agreement are:

- Host countries are prohibited from discriminating against foreign companies that can provide services, which are currently provided domestically;
- Host governments cannot set performance requirements for foreign companies, for example, meeting domestic environment or labour laws, price control, and so on;
- Foreign companies are not required to hire and train local staff, or to build local/domestic capacity in their particular areas of operations;

- No requirements for technology transfer from foreign to domestic entities.

As experiences in most of the countries have demonstrated, host governments can only maximise the value of foreign direct investment if they selectively regulate. It is, however, obvious that the GATS will not allow for such selective regulation.

The GATS agreement can potentially lead to:

- The lowering standards of services, particularly those provided to populations that are poor, vulnerable and politically and socially disadvantaged;
- Increased costs of services, many of which are essential for survival and development, such as water, health and education; this would further limit the access of poor and vulnerable population to these services.

Thus, exacerbates social and political inequalities within already disadvantaged and vulnerable populations such as migrant labour, those living in remote areas and rural communities in under-served areas. Examples of social and political inequalities include those arising from gender, caste, class, race and ethnic/cultural differences.

The Way Forward

First of all, the WTO decision-making structure must be overhauled. The so-called "Green Room/Consensus process" which ensures that only few countries dominate decision-making in the WTO has to be abolished. Decision-making is a fundamental issue. The developing countries and international civil society cannot agree to a new trade round unless the fundamental inequity in decision-making is banished from the WTO.

Some possible action and strategies regarding the AoA, TRIPs and GATS are:

1. Research and document what is happening in our respective societies and communities with regard to the liberalisation of agriculture, services and investments, and privatisation processes in general;

2. Create awareness about the AoA, TRIPs and GATS and their impact among all section of society;
3. Form alliances across sectors and areas (such as agriculture, labour, energy, health, education, environment, social welfare, etc.) to monitor liberalisation process.

Regarding the GATS, we must demand firm commitments from our governments (both from the north and south) that present and future GATS negotiations will not weaken domestic regulation and public provision of services. A multilateral agreement on service trade must strengthen domestic capacities and infrastructure for provision of services, not for weaken them.

On the TRIPs, it should be revised so as to ban patenting of all life forms including micro-organism, and to strengthen intellectual property systems – the so-called *sui generis* systems – that protect the knowledge of local and indigenous communities from biopiracy. The priority of public health concerns over intellectual property right should also be established – a move that will, among other things, enable HIV-positive people to buy life-prolonging patent drugs at low prices.

Concerning the Agreement on Agriculture, prior to Bretton Woods and WTO liberalisation, the livelihoods and employment of those in the rural sector in developing countries were protected through a combination of policies. However, under the existing rules of the Agreement on Agriculture developing country governments have very little scope to protect small farmers.

Hence, agricultural policies and trade agreements relating to agriculture need urgent revision. Developing countries must be able to protect local producers from dumping of products from the heavily subsidised markets of the EU and the US. In addition, there must be support for production techniques that reduce dependency on high-cost imported inputs and minimise environmental costs, which focus on food production for domestic markets, and on production and distribution methods which maximise the benefits to the producer. Such an approach would link overriding policy objectives of ensuring food, livelihood, and gender security, raising productivity and incomes in the agricultural sector and protecting the environment and

bio-diversity. All of this requires proactive national and international policies.

Alternative Approach

We disagree with the view that “there is no alternative”. In fact, many or most of the basic or broad principles for an alternative order are already with us, and it is really a question of specifying these broad principles to real societies in ways that respect the diversity of societies.

Work on alternatives is a collective past and present effort, one to which many North and South — have contributed.

We have dubbed the key points of this collective effort “deglobalisation.” While the following model addresses principally the situation of countries in the South, many points have relevance as well to societies and economies in the North.

What is deglobalisation?

We are *not* talking about withdrawing from the international economy.

We *are* speaking about:

- Reorienting our economies from the emphasis on production for export to production for the local market.
- Drawing most of our financial resources for development from within rather than becoming dependent on foreign investment and foreign financial markets;
- Carrying out the long-postponed measures of income redistribution and land redistribution to create a vibrant internal market that would be the anchor of the economy;
- De-emphasising growth and maximising equity in order to radically reduce environmental dis-equilibrium;
- Not leaving strategic economic decisions to the market but making them subject to democratic choice;
- Subjecting the private sector and the state to constant monitoring by civil society;

- Creating a new production and exchange complex that includes community cooperatives, private enterprises, and state enterprises, and excludes TNCs;
- Enshrining the principle of subsidiarity in economic life by encouraging production of goods to take place at the community and national level if it can be done so at reasonable cost in order to preserve community.

Notes

¹ Dani Rodrik, "Trading in Illusions", *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2001.

² Ibid.

³ Conroy, Murray and Rosset. *A Cautionary Tale: Failed Us Development Policy in Central America*. London: Reinner Publishers, 1996. Quoted in Aileen Kwa, *Agriculture in Developing Countries: Which Way Forward?* Occasional Paper 4, Geneva: South Centre, 2001.

Moderator's summary

- WTO represents 28 agreements signed as multi-lateral trade (GATT was plural-lateral). A violation of one can raise sanctions against a country, and a WTO sanction is automatically ratified by IMF and WB — it is a package-deal. Any alternatives have to address not reforming but restructuring.
- The development paradigm underlining this trinity of WB, IMF and WTO is export led growth. Trade-related investment missions ignore human resources — labour. There are also consequent social costs involved with Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). Agriculture was not part of the whole trade agreement at all but the rich countries have negotiated to include (Agreement on Agriculture) AoA. Subsistence agriculture is not taken into consideration.
- Financial service — \$2 trillion capital is moving around the world each day in search of profit for a handful of speculators. It is a tragedy that the world is being hijacked by these people. World trade totals \$11 trillion but this \$2 trillion has nothing to do with production, it just makes profit.

- How can we fight the issues facing small farmers, including the questions of subsidies and dumping? How do we ensure the food/economic security of the marginalized people of the whole world? Export growth means only those with money can buy.
- What is fair trade – equal exchange, trading my goods for your goods? Market economy is exchange values, not use values. What is the best way to reduce income inequalities?

Questions and Discussion

- Your paper addresses what is happening in the Philippines. I am unconvinced by the alternative of maintaining the status quo of the WTO, and influencing from within. Is it a feasible alternative that developing countries (that have not gained anything from being a member of the WTO family), could build an institution for themselves based on the alternatives that you have shared?
- Many governments depend increasingly on world economy, rather than their local population. Can we challenge them to be faithful to, and use their own populations so as to make them more independent? Some think they only need to appoint a suitable Minister of Finance to handle the international institutions and the economy will be right.
- In my view the world market is neither liberal nor global because so many countries are excluded from the market. Industrialized countries find many ways to protect their own market. Can the WTO be reformed? If yes, then how? Or is it better to withdraw from the global market and strengthen the local market economies such as subsistence economy in the Pacific? Also because the global finance market is a dangerous development can we find alternatives, or regulate and reform it?

Responses from presenter

- The local market has been neglected in the present model. Foreign capital is seen as the key to economic development in the Third World. They have to liberalize their trade in order to attract foreign capital. Is there liberalization at global level? Subsidy has been

increased in north countries so it is not a genuine liberalization. The push for liberalization in developing countries is to allow international markets to enter and build up a local market for economic development. Developing countries have to have the space to use their economic tools in order to generate income internally. We have to detach ourselves from several agreements such as AoA. Trade barriers have to be reconsidered in order to protect the domestic farmer. Developing countries don't have the resources to subsidize their products, so there is nothing to protect their farmers from subsidized goods coming in. We need to create space for national governments, communities and individuals to choose their own futures. We should not put too much emphasis on export markets because that will limit your space. You can't control prices on the export market. International trade is important but not all-important.

- WTO reformation: The four countries, the quad, have enormous power over institutions such as WTO. The institutions legitimize all trade disputes by producing a kind of consensus in which small countries can't express their perspective. It is difficult for these international institutions to be reformed. The way forward is maybe to reduce the mandate or importance of these institutions, and make it a forum for negotiation as it was during the GATT period.

Economic Globalization and the Environment: What can churches do?

Patrina Dumar, Pacific Concerns Resource Center.

Introduction

The natural environment is the source of life for all Pacific Islanders and their economies. A significant proportion of people and communities in the region still lead a subsistence lifestyle or, at least, depend directly on their natural resources to satisfy their basic needs. Resource-based commodities such as fisheries, forestry, agriculture and tourism maintain the already vulnerable economies of Pacific island countries. More importantly, the natural environment holds the spirituality and identity of Pacific people. It has molded their cultures and customs as people.

Today, this very source of life is under great threat. These threats come in the form of sea-level rise, destructive logging and mining practices, over-fishing, the accumulation of solid and hazardous wastes, loss of biodiversity, bio-piracy, etc. Climate change, unsustainable environmental management, inadequate environmental legislation,

non-participatory decision-making systems and the high levels of population growth contribute to these problems.

On closer examination of the general causes of these environmental problems, it is inevitable to link them to the growing political and economic influence of the agents of globalization, e.g., the large profit-driven transnational corporations and powerful financial institutions such as the IMF and WB. While it is important to appreciate that there are many dimensions to globalization (some of which are positive), the focus of my paper is on economic globalization, especially as driven by institutions and practices of international finance and business. This form of globalization has become the defining reality of our world, and it is fast threatening the very elements of Pacific cultures and value systems that give us wholeness — our natural environment (more traditionally known as the *vanua* or *whenua*, depending on where in the Pacific one is from).

In early May this year, Pacific Island NGOs organized a regional consultation on globalization, debt and trade, held in Nadave, Fiji. Participants at this workshop identified three priority concerns:

1. Economic reforms that promote privatization and reduce the role of the state;
2. The ever-growing power and role of transnational corporations (TNCs) that undermine the concerns of local communities and civil society; and
3. Free trade.

While all three issues are inter-linked and create grave threats to the environment, the second issue, that of the power of TNCs, raises the most concern. In the race to attract investment particularly into developing countries, each nation's government competes with the other to offer generous tax holidays, higher subsidies etc. In doing so, they compromise on environmental and employment standards. Forests and fishing resources are depleted for quick profits, and mining companies rape resources with little regard to environmental and social costs. Furthermore, the growing political unrest faced in the Pacific region, resulting in corruption, lawlessness and poverty, further exacerbates the already growing influence of TNCs.

In Bougainville, globalization has been slowly advancing since the 1960s when gold, silver and copper were found in the mountains. According to Moses Havini of the Bougainville People's Congress, the traditional land tenure system had provided sustenance, but the United Kingdom declared that the state owned all the land and everything on it and in it. The people were evicted and their traditional land mined against their wishes. Mountains were torn down and rivers were poisoned. The environment was devastated. Mining officials falsified reports when they claimed that the fish in the rivers were edible, but, in fact, independent assessment reports revealed that the fish contained dangerous levels of mercury. Local people developed both mental and physical diseases, and acid rain destroyed fruit trees and vegetable crops. The copper mine closed 23 years later, only after local people were forced to resort to violent means in order to be heard.

A similar story can be seen in the Island of Santa Isabel in the Solomon Islands, where overseas logging companies have cleared three-quarters of the forest cover since it began four years ago. Through the companies' determination and the state's susceptibility to monetary offers, traditional methods of consultation were bypassed, leaving the women and youth out of the decision-making process. In justifying the importance for women and youth to participate in decisions pertaining to the environment, Ian Aujare, a youth leader from the island, said, "We are traditionally a matrilineal society, and yet the women's views in this [logging] situation are being ignored. The youth are also strongly opposed to the logging activities because it is they who will inherit the [consequent] social and environmental destruction." In 1999, the women and youth of the community united to create a human chain and managed to stop bulldozers from entering a proposed logging area. Protests have continued since that time, including various avenues of action to stop such destructive acts upon the environment. In the middle of this year, the Solomon Islands' Government finally banned the logging practices.

These two examples show the human and environmental devastation caused by TNCs (who are, in fact, the key agents of globalization), but they also show how civil society can bind together and protect their communities and environments from these negative

forces. Given that such victories are not common in the region, it is crucial that anyone interested in making economic globalization favour human rights and environmental protection, start first by empowering local communities, especially the marginalized and the vulnerable.

What can churches do?

In the Pacific, churches play a crucial role in raising people's understanding of the world around them and their attitude towards it. As such, churches have a vital task in addressing the growing negative threats of economic globalization in the Pacific.

Education

From a Christian perspective, one cannot ignore economic globalization and its effects, as this market-driven phenomenon has become a competing faith-system in today's world. Christian education can look at economic realities from biblical perspectives and inform/empower people to resist consumerism and the continual need to earn more. This will entail changing attitudes and perceptions:

- From trying to justify ourselves through economic activity, to being justified by God's grace through faith;
- From 'what will profit me,' to 'what will enrich others;'
- From using nature, to participating in and enjoying nature'
- From standing in awe of money, to reverence for human beings;
- From being controlled by the random movements of faceless economic transactions, to being empowered to act in relation to what matters in our lives and world.

If meeting the needs of the neighbour is a central aspect of what it means to be a Christian, then when economic institutions fail to meet these needs, the church must resist — and the church has the power to do just that!

Explore Alternatives

In the Pacific, the traditional economy and values systems have protected some Pacific island communities from feeling the full brunt of the negative effects of economic globalization. As such, the church

needs to look into ways of promoting the protection of those traditional systems and values which are to our advantage, as well as to facilitate discussions around alternatives. Already NGOs, academics and other interest-groups have engaged in forums to seek alternatives to economic globalization. Certainly, the churches have a spiritual role to play in addressing such an issue regionally.

Promote Good Environmental Governance Practices

The church may also step in to ensure governments adhere to good governance principles in environmental decision-making matters. The enhanced participation of women and youth (as well as any marginalized sector in society) in environmental governance must be promoted to address unsustainable development. All stakeholders must be involved in the development process.

While efforts are in place to address this, certain energy channeling systems remain weak, and, if they are improved upon, may better environmental governance practices. The guidance of, and giving priority to, our youth is one such example. The educated and inspired young graduates today have great awareness of environmental problems, but they are given little or no direction and support in efforts to make a difference. Similarly, the views of women (who are usually the most affected by natural resource scarcity), are not heard or taken into consideration at local, national and regional decision-making levels.

Advocacy

Church leaders and representatives are well-respected by government leaders and officials. As such, it is important that they, on behalf of the church, contribute their views and engages in dialogue with key decision-makers from both the state and private sector. Church leaders also command respect from the mass population (in particular the congregation), and will have the ability to mobilize the community to demand a more value-driven approach to dealing with the environment and people. These activities, of course, will receive maximum output if done in solidarity and partnership with other interested individuals, groups and organizations.

Notes

Report of the Regional Consultation on Globalization, Trade, Investment and Debt, 30 April–2 May 2001, Nadave, Fiji.

Engaging Economic Globalization as a Communion, Lutheran World Federation, Department for Theology and Studies, May 2001.

Discussion following PCRC Presentation

Questions:

- The youth see global warming as a key environmental issue for the Pacific because some Pacific island countries may go under the sea. The big powers don't listen to the small Pacific nations and President Bush would not sign the Kyoto protocol. Could the rest of the world call a boycott on a product such as Coca Cola (which is symbolic of America) as a protest by the Pacific and the rest of the world, to hit the USA in their business pocket?
- How many people and NGOs are involved in discussion on environmental issues in Fiji and other Pacific island countries? Do the people in the villages know what PCRC are doing, and do they participate in your activities?
- Do you network in reciprocal problem sharing and advocacy with NGOs in other countries who are addressing environment issues?
- How much time do we have before some of your islands submerge, and how many islands are under threat?
- What is the relationship between NGOs and the governments of the Pacific? What is the perspective of the general public toward these NGOs? What concern do local and international corporations have towards the environment?
- WCC have considered the possibility of a boycott of Exxon. This is a big issue in Norway and Changemakers produced postcards recommending such a boycott as a symbol of both the evil forces

of climate change and the people's resistance. The churches in Europe and the USA have put pressure on their governments to accept the Kyoto protocol. What more can we do as a global community of churches and youth to share our stories, strengthen our network, and globalize our solidarity?

- Is the issue of genetic pollution discussed in terms of genetically modified crops and the movement of these genes?
- In what way do the TNCs weaken the decision-making power of the island country governments and is there corruption? What is the response of civil society, especially in Fiji?

Presenter's Responses

- *Regarding the boycott of Coca Cola and Exxon* - a global initiative receives international attention. In Fiji it would only be symbolic, but I totally support any such initiative and hope WCC passes a resolution to this effect.
- *The role of environmental organizations and participation at community and village level.* We do have a significant number of people involved, and a good relationship with government. In our Pacific culture a lot of work is done on community-based resource management. Government departments such as the Department of Agriculture also use the tool of participatory learning and action. Another example of cooperation is a strategic action plan for bio-diversity. The government and NGOs worked together to document community perceptions. However, in some PICs, government systems are weak and not open to full participation of local people. Our environmental organizations are not strong on other issues such as climate change. Our culture hinders aggressive advocacy, so we need to find smart ways of talking to governments about their decision-making that does not involve the community.
- The PICs are rather weak on environmental legislation. Fiji does not have legislation but includes environmental protection components in other acts. We can't take legal action against private companies or governments, we can only do advocacy work. In Fiji a bill concerning sustainable development should have been passed

last year, but the coup happened. It may be passed by a newly elected government. Legislation should give civil society stronger grounds to address environmental concerns.

- *How much time do the islands have?* We have four atoll island countries in the Pacific, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands and Tokelau. Scientists say we have 50 years. Other countries such as Fiji and French Polynesia have low-lying islands (3-4 metres above sea level). Higher islands will face coral bleaching and coastal erosion. There will be environment refugees, for example Tuvalu is trying to relocate to Australia.
- I am not qualified to speak on *genetic patents and genetic pollution*. The South Pacific Forum is working on a regional model for PIC governments to write patent laws.
- *Influence of TNCs*. Four Pacific nations fall into the 'least developed countries' category. Politicians try to satisfy their constituencies by creating economic development with weak (or no) environmental legislation. That creates a paradise for TNCs to do whatever they want. In the process local traditional protocol is ignored, or only the men make decisions on national resource management. This must change. In some communities women cannot sit in the meetings, but there are different ways to consult with women. Their views usually oppose development initiators who, therefore, prefer to exclude them.
- In the issues PCRC is dealing with has the church been a proactive partner or just an observer? Are there steps to get the church more involved?
- *Answer*. The church did play an active role in the establishment of PCRC and we enjoy a good relationship with Pacific churches. We are invited to give talks and share views, but we would like to enjoy a more active relationship. We see the church as a powerful agent to mobilize people on environmental issues.
- In answering the question, "What more can the churches do?" I believe the answer lies in the history of the church's work with apartheid. Churches teamed up together to move the apartheid

discussion. Apply that same, force, enthusiasm, and interest to global warming because the issue is just as destructive. It is a fact that the Pacific country governments find the chequebook diplomacy in the corridors of UN etc., too strong to resist. Our domestic policies are not strong. Without the world churches' help we will sink.

- *NGOs working with churches on environment:* the history of the environment movement in the Pacific is the same as that in other regions —the women started the movement. Mothers saw that food (including inshore fishing), and shelter materials were becoming increasingly inaccessible. There is strong cooperation between NGOs and churches in the region. PCRC is an offspring of the PCC. NGOs are sometimes seen as too radical.
- *Genetic pollution and patenting etc.* is a strong issue in the Pacific but we don't know enough to deal with it. An example is the Minister for Health in Tonga who arranged a genetic exercise in Tonga with a bio-genetic company. The people didn't know what it meant to have people taking their DNA until an NGO raised the issue — then the church acted. Flora and fauna is being taken away, and we don't have the research, skills, or the resources to mount a campaign or create awareness of what that means. We need help.
- *Relationship with churches* — we need to organize WCC and PCC on a Pacific forum as one step to work toward a stronger relationship with the churches.
- *Comments from WCC:*
 - 1) Discussions are under way between the JPIC team and the Pacific desk to address the issue of the participation of churches on the subject of climate change in the Pacific. A humanitarian and emergency relief arm of WCC is coming to the Pacific to discuss how and under what circumstances we can help the churches to respond to the needs of environmental refugees. The hidden agenda is to bring climate change onto the priority list for international action.
 - 2) *Bio genetics and the issue of our intellectual property rights to our own resources:* in response to concern from the Tongan churches, in

March this year Dr. Martin Robbra and a WCC team held a consultation to raise awareness of genetic patenting and pollution. International experts came to Tonga to discuss the issue from a Pacific perspective.

- 3) Pacific Partners' Forum is a strategic dialogue going on between NGOs and partners. Hopefully if we have another meeting in two years time we can produce concrete results on how we can link the Pacific to other regions to address these issues.
- *Presenter:* climate change is big issue with WCC, particularly the Pacific Desk. They recognise its threats to the Pacific. Last month the Kyoto protocol was supposed to be ratified, but the 1.8 – 2% that has been agreed upon won't solve the problems. We need a 70% reduction. Consumers need to know how many communities are moving and how many cultures are being lost. World audiences need to share stories and compile documents to raise awareness and support protests. The international protocol won't address the consumer market so we have to do it.

Integration & Disintegration:

Economic Globalization & The Island of Hope¹

Christopher Lind, Ph.D.

Introduction

While I am trained in Christian Social Ethics I also consider myself to be a contextual theologian. Normally, this means paying special attention to the nuances of my Canadian context and the special questions my people are asking about God's action in the world. Here, I find myself in a different, but equally self-conscious context. Here I am the outsider, trying to provide resources for others while also being a learner, trying to listen for the questions particular to this time and place.

For help in this task I have turned to a Biblical scholar from Tonga. His name is John Havea and he has written on the subject of Pacific island hermeneutics. How does the reality of living among the Pacific Islands affect how one interprets Scripture, Tradition and the world around us?

Havea lifts up for us the question of boundaries and how we interpret them. According to him, the idea of a boundary which serves as a solid barrier that prevents crossing is a continental notion and not appropriate to islanders:

The understanding of a boundary as something that decisively limits, as a solid barrier that categorically prevents crossing, I argue, is a continental notion that is inept for the islandic experience.... Though this may just be an imaginary line, the boundary is understood as a limit that separates.... One must bear in mind that a wall, for instance, shares in both the inside and the outside. It is not that which separates but that which links! In this regard, boundaries define the outside and the inside, and boundaries are able to define because they are able to separate.²

Havea argues that island people have a different approach to boundaries. In the first instance they think not of walls but of the ocean and the ocean does not separate people so much as link them:

Since we live off the ocean, the islandic boundary is essential to our existence: we live off our boundary by means of the food that we draw from the ocean, and we live off our boundary by inhabiting the islands. We cannot stay away from our islandic boundary because not only do we find nourishment from the ocean but also it is what links one island with another. The islandic understanding of boundary then is not only something that limits and separates, but also something that provides and links. We are a people of/f the boundary...³

Havea makes a bold claim. I don't think it holds in all circumstances. I have seen pacific islands where walls separated the men's section from the women's section for instance. In addition, I think it is just as hard (and foolhardy) to make grand generalizations about European or continental culture as it is to make them about Pacific or island culture. In spite of that, I find his re-imagination of the role of the ocean from boundary to bridge, to be an intriguing one. This is especially so when we consider Economic Globalization which is said to erode, if not obliterate, all boundaries which come before it.

His hermeneutical approach has at least three effects here. First of all it invites those of us not from a Pacific island context to re-imagine the idea of island/ocean/island. Western culture, western property rights and western mythology re-inforce images of islands as containers of solitary strength. This is the island pictured by Dafoe in "Robinson Crusoe". In some ways the analogy of the Kingdom of God as an Island of Hope, by using the singular "Island" instead of Islands, falls into the trap of re-inforcing this myth. However, a closer reading of the text prepared by the Pacific Churches shows that their concept of "the land" includes not only all the Islands and the people but also the sea. They are actually describing an intricate network of traditional communal values based on culturally mediated relationships. I infer their agreement with the proposition that no 'man' is an island and so therefore we should really be talking about "Islands of Hope" if not an Ocean of Hope.

Second of all, Havea's analysis invites us to rethink our approach to boundaries in general. Where are we erecting imaginary boundaries in our analysis? Are these boundaries permeable? Can these boundaries nourish us and carry us to other islands of understanding and insight? As you will see later in this paper, I am pursuing this approach with a reading of a Biblical text that has previously been beyond the boundaries of the liturgical and devotional lives of most Christians.

Finally, by drawing our attention to a boundary which is unstable, a boundary which is constantly moving, a boundary which creates as well as erodes, and a boundary with the capacity to both nourish and destroy, Havea has brought us into the territory of contradiction. This is a fruitful territory. It is appropriate for the contradictory forces of both globalization and economic globalization. However, it can be viewed as uncommon territory for Christian Ethics because it requires for response an Ethics of Contradiction.

An Ethics of Contradiction is an Ethics which requires us to say both yes and no in response to contradictory forces.⁴ This is uncommon because it is more typical to think of Christian Ethics as the articulation of a Christian principle which produces ethical behaviour by simple application. However, sometimes we find ourselves in situations which are not so straightforward, situations which require an acknowledgement that powerful and contradictory

forces are at work and they are not easily resolved. Some of Jesus' parables can be described in this way (ie. 'Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and render unto God that which is God's').

An Ethics of Contradiction can also arise in response to a profound conflict of worldviews. Moral vision and understanding are rooted in particular approaches to the world. Moral conflict can occur not only at the level of conflicting principles but also at the level of conflicting (or contradicting) worlds. When moral worlds collide, it is not just a matter of choice between principles but a choice among possible worlds to inhabit. Such a choice requires either a conversion or a contradictory response — hence, an Ethics of Contradiction.⁵

Clarity

As a contextual theologian I normally begin with a consideration of the questions which arise out of the context of the struggles of people of faith. These struggles represent the immediate commitments which arise out of faith response. These questions are guided by a social analysis and a theological analysis. The analysis generates specific action plans which become in their turn, the realized faith commitments of people and the church. However, in this place I accept the challenge to construct my talk in terms of the categories of 'clarity, critique and alternatives'.

Happily I can leave to others an analysis of the detail of globalization. However, the method still requires of me to be 'clear' about what I understand economic globalization to mean. A formal definition would look like this:

The process of creating integrated global markets for goods, services and capital ... and ... the social effects of this process.

An informal definition would look like this:

I would define globalization as the freedom of my group of companies to invest where it wants, when it wants, to produce what it wants, to buy and sell where it wants,

and support the fewest restrictions possible coming from labour laws and social conventions.⁶

Social Critique

Much of the literature about economic globalization is organized around the question whether globalization is a reality which is inescapable or a project one can decline. My own view is that globalization is both. The first definition refers to a change in global structures. If the structures of the world change, one's only choice is to join or withdraw from the world completely. Since withdrawing from the world is not a realistic choice for the majority, it is possible to say globalization is inescapable.

The second definition refers to globalization as a project. In this case it is a political project. The agents of change are global corporations and they are the biggest winners. The agenda is political because these corporations want to remove those public policies like labour laws, environmental regulations and social conventions which reduce corporate profits.

It is always important to remember that a globalized market economy is a human creation. We have created it and we can destroy it, reshape it or re-negotiate it. This is why so much emphasis is placed on the idea globalization is inevitable. If we are convinced it cannot be changed, we will not resist it. So, the issue of choice is also political. As in any political process, the larger question is what criteria will be used to guide this choice? Only by understanding the process can we empower ourselves to exercise our power to shape the outcome.

Globalization & the Market System

One of the other key aspects for understanding globalization is an understanding of markets. Under globalization it is markets that are integrated not societies or cultures. When markets are integrated they form a market system and when they form a system then the relationship between markets and society is reversed. In a traditional society, or in a society characterized by long periods of economic stability, economic relationships are 'embedded' within social

relationships. That is, society determines some of the conditions under which these economic activities take place. Culture, religion, and politics become instruments of economic regulation in such societies. Societies negotiate the terms of trade.

However, when markets are linked to form a market system then the power balance is reversed and the market system begins to determine the conditions under which culture, religion and politics will operate. Under globalization, markets for goods, services and capital have been linked to form a new global market system. Politicians are now discovering that instead of making political decisions which regulate markets, the global market system is now regulating politics. The most powerful corporations are negotiating the terms of political debate and struggle.

Moral, Immoral & Amoral

A market system is neither moral nor immoral. A market system has no conscience and so we say it is a-moral. If this were a person we would say it was a sociopath and put them in jail because of the danger they represent to the community. This imminent danger means the pressing social priority for the whole inhabited earth (the oikumene) is to re-regulate the global economy for the good of society. The economic historian Karl Polanyi analysed this same phenomenon in his work on the Industrial Revolution⁷. There he described what he called a 'double movement'. The first movement was the social devastation brought by Industrialization. The second movement was the social response which invented the union movement and social programs like welfare and public pensions.

A contemporary example is global climate change. Unchecked emission of greenhouse gases by the rich industrialized countries is threatening the whole inhabited earth. This demonic reality has led to the signing of the Kyoto Protocol. This Protocol is far from perfect. However, it does represent a first attempt at global regulation in order to save the planet. It represents the second half of the 'double movement'.

Integration & Disintegration

One of the observable effects of markets is that markets integrate. Markets bring people together who otherwise might not come together. They gather goods from many places and re-allocate them. However, insofar as markets form market systems, they integrate and they also dis-integrate. They bring people and resources together but the system also erodes the social, cultural and political frameworks in which communities live. Revolutions like globalization are characterized by the contradictory and simultaneous experience of integration and dis-integration. What is integrated are the local and regional markets. What has not been integrated are the societies that surround each of those local markets, the cultures surrounding the markets and the political processes that are characteristic of that society and market. Because the economic base has been integrated, then these other processes have been disconnected and so we experience disintegration at the levels of culture, politics and society.

The relationship between economy and society has been turned upside down. Instead of the society of Fiji determining what will be the appropriate economic relationships in Fiji, those relationships are now part of a global market and the market is telling Fiji what the society will look at. It is possible to describe these two phenomena in terms of a market society, and a moral society - a market economy and a moral economy.

Market Economy vs. Moral Economy

A Moral economy is both a memory and a project. It is a memory that is expressed in society in times of crisis. I will use an example from my context. About four years ago in western Canada we had a major river flood. There was so much rain and melting snow that the river expanded its banks by 40km. There was massive devastation. In the context of this crisis, everyone responded together. People had to be evacuated from their farms and towns and this was done according to the severity of their crisis. The closer they were to the water, the sooner they got out. It wasn't the rich first and poor second. Everybody in the community came together to pile up sandbags, the state called in the army and they came to save the farms and towns. No one

raised the question about whether or not we should do this in a different way. Without thinking people expressed the values that are the most deeply held in the society. In this sense the moral economy is expressed in terms of memory. Before you have time to think it is expressed.

This is not the experience of every day life. Our economic relationships are regulated by the market, and we would not describe the market as moral. It is very important to understand the difference between the words moral, immoral and amoral. If I say something is immoral it is having the right morality versus the wrong morality. To say something is amoral is to say it does not have the capacity for moral judgement. When we say that a person is amoral we actually have a medical diagnosis. We call that person a sociopath – someone who has no capacity for making a moral judgements. These people are dangerous to society. Most serial killers are sociopaths. They need to be put in jail. The market does not have the capacity to make moral judgements. Markets determine price, supply and demand, not what is right or wrong. What this means is that markets have no conscience. The market is entirely indifferent to the fate of the participants in a market. If you go bankrupt or if your children starve to death, the market does not care because the market has no conscience. We regulate markets in order to protect ourselves from these dangers.

Economic Globalization has non-Market Effects

A special characteristic of the economic life of the Pacific region is the persistence of the subsistence economy, also called the traditional or non-market economy. This is where goods and services are traded but not for money. On some islands this is a very extensive aspect of social life. Economic globalization is a globalization of price setting markets. That means it is an integration of markets where money is exchanged. When economists talk about the GNP of Fiji, they are only describing those economic relationships where money changes hands. If I am living in Fiji and I climb a tree and get my own coconuts then I have something to drink and cook with, coconut oil and so on. This is an economic activity but this gathering of the coconut is not expressed in numbers about the formal Fijian economy. If I go to my

neighbour and pay them to climb and pick the coconut, that is part of the formal economy. The government may try and tax this exchange, for example.

Capitalist markets propel themselves by growth. In that sense, so does cancer. Markets can grow by increasing the production or the trade of a good, but they also grow by moving goods from the non-formal sector into the formal sector. If everybody stops fishing for themselves and starts buying fish from the market, the economy is said to grow even though no more people are fed or fish taken from the sea.

Globalization involves the integration of price setting markets and that can have non-market effects. Policies are made by governments in relation to those aspects of the economy that involve money. This can have an effect in the non-money economy which may be detrimental to marginalized groups. For example, traditional societies rely heavily on communal resources which include land and the minerals beneath, wild animals, plants and trees, water and fish. We can call them the global commons. These resources are owned by the community but there may be no piece of paper giving title to private property. The integration of markets under economic globalization puts enormous pressure on these communal resources to be privatized. Private property is one of the underlying assumptions of global markets. The pressure to shift resources from communal ownership to private ownership extends beyond trees, minerals and fish to include the genetic resources of your own body. The DNA of the communities of the Pacific can also be seen as being part of the genetic global commons. Now people are applying for patents on this communal resource. When they do that they make it part of the formal economy - money changes hands.

The new global market system

We have been moving back and forth between economic and political discussion, because you can distinguish but not separate these two. The markets have been combined to form a global market, to form a global system. This system needs to be regulated. Transnational Corporations dislike uncertainty. They want stability. They can prosper in a dictatorship because there is certainty. They need to regulate this

global market in order to protect their own interests.⁸ The questions before us are these:

Under the new global market system:

Who will benefit from it?

Who will regulate it?

What mechanism will they use to regulate it?

To whom will they be accountable?

These key questions have important ethical dimensions. Some will benefit and others will not. Some will regulate it and others will not. Sometimes they will be regulated in ethical ways and sometimes in unethical ways. If the new regulatory bodies are not accountable to anybody, then they are not being ethically responsible. So we are faced with the need to identify the criteria to guide the regulation of a global economic system and we do so in an environment characterized by economic integration and social, political and cultural dis-integration.

Theological Critique

As I was anticipating this conference I was pondering the translation by the Pacific Council of Churches of 'Kingdom of God' language into 'Island of Hope' language. I was pondering this in the context of patterns of integration and dis-integration. I asked myself what Biblical stories also included this pattern of integration and dis-integration. I was surprised to find myself turning to Judges 19 and the story some people refer to as the Levite's Concubine.

I was surprised because some people think of this story as perhaps the most gruesome tale in all of Scripture.⁹ My shock was alleviated when I realized this is a story about the 'absence of the kingdom of God'. Here we have the Hebrew Scripture teaching us by means of a negative example. At a time when we are confronted with a negative form of oikumene in the form of globalization, it might be instructive to turn as well to a negative form of the kingdom of God.¹⁰

Let me recall the story for you. A Levite was living in the hill country of Ephraim. One of his wives (not his first wife hence concubine) came from Bethlehem in Judah. In anger she left him and

returned to her father. After four months, the Levite went to retrieve her. His wife welcomed him as did his father-in-law who entertained him. After five days the Levite set off for home accompanied by his wife. After sunset, they sought shelter near Gibeah in the land of Benjamin. For the longest time no one would take them in. Finally an old man who was originally from the same country of Ephraim, took them in.

A crowd gathered outside the door of the old man and demanded that the Levite be presented to them for intercourse. The old man refused and offered his daughter instead. The crowd refused the daughter and so the Levite took his wife and thrust her outside. The crowd assaulted and abused her all night. In the morning the Levite opened the door to resume his journey. He found his wife lying on the threshold. He commanded her to get up so they could continue the journey 'but there was no answer'. He put her body on his ass and returned home. Upon his arrival he cut up his wife's body into 12 pieces and sent them 'through the length and breadth of Israel' saying 'Have you ever seen the like of this since the Israelites came out of Egypt?' and inviting them to gather and speak their minds.

All of the Israelites gathered for a General Assembly and heard from the Levite how the Benjamites had broken the code of hospitality and had raped and killed his wife only when they were prevented from killing him. The rest of Israel then declared war on the Benjamites. At least 25,000 Benjamites died and 22,000 Israelites. Domination was total. Not only the soldiers died but all the women and children too. (20:48) "The Israelites ... put to the sword the people in the towns and the cattle, every creature that they found; they also set fire to every town within their reach."

The Israelites held a second Assembly and "felt remorse over their brother Benjamin" (21:6). There were a few scattered survivors but the Israelites had promised that none of their daughters would marry Benjamites. They asked if any village had not heeded the call to Bethel and there was one village that had not done so. So they sent another army and slaughtered all the inhabitants except for the unmarried women, who were given to the remaining Benjamites. When that was not enough, some more women were kidnapped until the tribe of Benjamin could reproduce again.

It is not often one has to apologize for reading scripture but I apologize for reading such a horrendous story. Like Havea's oceanic boundary, I have used the contradictory boundary of Scripture to transport us to a new perspective on the Kingdom of God and its absence in our world. Surely there is no book more well known in the world than the Bible? And yet here is a story from that same text that no one knows. It is not part of our lectionary traditions, nor is it part of our piety. As a part of the Scriptural Canon it is ever present yet it is simultaneously absent from our knowing. Its truth is so dangerous we must repress it.¹¹ Here, at many levels, is a vivid example of the absence of the Kingdom of God. What can we learn from what it looks like when the kingdom of god is absent? Below, I have identified seven characteristics:

- 1) **A complete perversion of values.** In this story we have vengeance and greed and anger. This is a perversion of the justice called for by the prophet Isaiah (58: 1-8) and a mockery of the year of Jubilee called for by the Levitical code (Lev. 25: 8-55)
- 2) **Communication is based on lies.** The Levite doesn't say 'I put my wife out to the crowd', he says instead 'Look what the Benjamites have done!' If you read the text carefully, you'll discover it doesn't say that the wife was dead on the doorstep. It just says she didn't respond when he called to her. The Levite then took her home and dismembered her.
- 3) **Integration based on exclusion.** The tribes of Israel are gathered based on these lies, but it is based on exclusion because the Benjamites are excluded. They are not given a chance to explain what really happened. The text distinguishes between the Israelites and the Benjamites as if they were not one of the twelve tribes. They are excluded from the decision making and they are excluded from the identification of the Tribes of Israel.
- 4) **Violence without mercy.** The murder and dismemberment of the Levite's wife is an extreme form of violence. It is without limit. In the same way, the murder of all the non-combatants among the Benjamites — the women and children — is also without limit. To that list we can add all the people who didn't

come to the second assembly, and the women who were kidnapped at the end.

- 5) **Violence without ecological limit.** When the Benjamites were killed, the text tells us no living creature survived, not even the cattle when the towns were set on fire.
- 6) **Excluded ones become the scapegoats.** When the plagues descend on Egypt, Moses tells his people to slaughter a lamb and put its blood on their door posts so their first born children will not die. When Abraham prepares to sacrifice his son Isaac, God intervenes and instructs him to slaughter a goat instead. From these images we develop the doctrine of Substitutionary Atonement whereby Jesus has become a sacrificial lamb whose blood will preserve us from the consequences of our sin. These theological and Biblical images describe a psychological pattern known as 'scapegoating', whereby an innocent but vulnerable group is set apart for blame enabling to guilty to escape the moral consequences of their actions¹². In this case, the resolution of the violation of the law of hospitality is achieved by blaming the Benjamites for a sin which belongs to the Levite.
- 7) **The apparent resolution is based on further oppression.** The story appears to draw to a close when the Tribes of Israel realize they run the risk of eliminating the Tribe of Benjamin forever. This new problem is resolved when a group of women are kidnapped in order to provide forced marriages and reproductive services, thereby allowing the Tribe to continue.

These characteristics are certainly opposed to the values identified by the Law and the Prophets (Deut. 6: 6-9). They are also opposed to the Kingdom of God described by Jesus (Luke 4: 43). Here we are reminded of the conviction of the World Council of Churches as expressed in the declarations of the Harare Assembly (1998).

Globalization poses a pastoral, ethical theological and spiritual challenge to the churches and the ecumenical movement in particular. The vision behind globalization is a competing vision of the oikumene, the unity of humankind and the whole inhabited earth. The

globalized oikumene of domination is in contrast with the oikumene of faith and solidarity that motivates and energizes the ecumenical movement. The logic of globalization needs to be challenged by an alternative way of life of community in diversity.¹³

Under economic globalization we can see that the world is becoming one. It is becoming unified in terms of global markets, in terms of telecommunications and in terms of an emerging global commercial culture. How can we tell if this unity is the unity we have been seeking and the unity we have been promised? How can we tell the difference between a world becoming one under the direction of the transnational corporations and one world under the guidance of God? What are the characteristics of the presence of the Kingdom of God, and of the absence of the Kingdom of God? So we need to ask ourselves, do we have an integration based on inclusion or exclusion? Do we contain our violence or do we experience violence without mercy? Is the apparent resolution of our difficulties based on justice or on further oppression?

Ethics of Globalization

Another way to tell the difference is to analyze the language being used. One characteristic of the language of globalization is that it is always about competition. We are constantly encouraged to become more competitive as if competition was the only value that we held. I do not propose that competition by itself is bad, but when it is held up as the one value to be acknowledged before all others it can become demonic.

I like to compete. I play sports and I like to be competitive. I also want to be just and fair and kind. When competition is raised up as the only value to guide our behaviour then it leads to domination. If I want to compete with you economically, the competition is not just today at 3pm. It is today, tomorrow, next week, and next year. It never ends. I want to win and I want you to lose – today, tomorrow and next year. I want you to keep losing so I can keep winning. When I keep winning and you keep losing it is called domination.

Ethic, Activity and Attitude

Ethics are the rules that govern our behaviour. They produce specific activities. In order to produce those activities they have to be supported by appropriate attitudes. I used to be a smoker. Eventually I was persuaded that smoking would kill me and be dangerous to my children. I concluded it would be wrong of me to continue smoking so my ethic changed. I quit smoking, then again and again and again until finally I was able to quite smoking for good. I had to really believe that smoking was bad for me. I had to have the right attitude to keep quitting even when it was so difficult. In order for me to dominate you I have not to care about you. If you are hungry or broken or bleeding, in order for me to continue to be competitive, I have to not care what happens to you. If I care, then my attitude is changing. I will want to pick you up off the ground and stand in solidarity with you. I will want to converse with you to find out how we can cooperate in order to make sure this doesn't happen again. The attitude of compassion supports the activity of solidarity. The activity of solidarity is governed by the ethic of cooperation. It is possible to chart these competing ethics in the following manner:

COMPETITION	ETHIC	COOPERATION
DOMINATION	ACTIVITY	SOLIDARITY
INDIFFERENCE	ATTITUDE	COMPASSION

I ask myself as a Christian, the following questions: what has been the teaching of the Christian Church in terms of ethics? What did Jesus teach? What do the Gospels say about how we should live? Should we adopt the left side or the right side? Every time I ask the question, no matter how I ask it, I always arrive at the same answer. If you ask me to adopt the left side, you are asking me to abandon my Christian faith. This I cannot do. Actually, this approach goes to the heart of the ecumenical movement's approach to economic questions.¹⁴

Alternatives: Ecumenical Ethical Resources

In the work of WCC there has been different themes over the last forty years which have governed the council's work on social issues. All of these themes represent resources which may be applied by those seeking ethical criteria to guide their response to economic globalization.

Responsibility

The first theme that comes to mind is "The Responsible Society"¹⁵. Responsibility evokes the idea that with power comes an obligation to use it wisely. This has deep roots in the Roman Catholic tradition. St. Thomas Aquinas commented on it extensively in his *Summa Theologica*. This is the theme of governance. The King and the Priest had the most power in ancient societies and with that power came responsibility. If transnational corporations are now the most powerful organisations in the world then it is now their responsibility to exercise that power with justice. Another understanding of responsibility is accountability. The people who engage in this activity have to be accountable for the results of that activity. For example, first world industrialised nations, USA, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, etc have to be held accountable for the environmental consequences of pollution.

Justice

The theme of "The Responsible Society" was replaced in the WCC by the theme of the "Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society" at the Nairobi Assembly in 1975.

Justice includes right relationship with God. Another understanding is human rights. Human Rights language is a new language. In some denominations the idea that human rights language is religious language is controversial. But it is part of the evolution of the understanding of Christian Ethics. The great Genevan Reformer John Calvin spoke the language of obligation and duty. From this point of view, God is the primary actor and we are the respondents.

Our task is to fulfill our duty towards God. We also have obligations toward our neighbour and if these are taken seriously then our neighbours have a claim on us. Our neighbours have rights which we have an obligation to honour. So the language of rights, even human rights, can be understood as a variant on the deontological language of duty and obligation.

Justice can also be understood in terms of equity and fairness. The WCC argument on the issue of equity in global climate change is a good example of this. In the Kyoto protocol there is an assumed calculation as to who has the right to pollute and who has access to what percentage of the atmosphere for this purpose. What was proposed by the protocol was that the existing common atmospheric resource should be divided according to historical pollution patterns. Under this proposal, either the UK should have largest percentage access to the atmosphere because they have been polluting for the longest, or the USA should have the largest access because they have the largest industrialized economy. India's proposal was "One person, one portion". The principle was equity and this position was supported by the WCC.

Participation

The dignity of every person is compromised without the right to participate in decisions which affect them. The World Council of Churches has consistently supported these historic struggles. This is true whether the issue has been political democracy in the Soviet bloc, racial discrimination under apartheid, or the human rights of women in patriarchy. The new form of this struggle is a response to economic globalization. The new agents of economic change are transnational corporations. Through regional treaties like NAFTA or through multilateral institutions like the World Trade Organization, these transnational corporations have introduced global policies to support and stabilize their activities. In peoples' gatherings from Genoa to Seattle to Quebec City, representatives of Civil Society have used popular protest as a way to assert their right to participate in these decisions.

Sustainability

This word has been used most often to describe a form of economic development. However, the Churches have used the word most often to describe human development. In that sense the World Council of Churches has contrasted sustainable development with sustainable communities. For example, Canada has large forests. The forest industry representatives talk about sustainability but what they mean is having a sustainable yield. They want to make sure they can cut down the same number of trees year after year after year. The Christian Churches were among the critics who argued that the forest was a complex ecological system. That means a sustainable forest is different from sustainable yield because it must allow for the sustenance of all the people, animals and organisms for whom the forest is also home. We could say that our human technological capacity is struggling with the sin of pride by refusing to acknowledge that only God is without limits. The ecological limits of the globe are being challenged as well as the social limits of human communities.

Peace¹⁶

A constant feature of the social witness of the World Council of Churches has been its witness for peace. This extends from violence between nation states to violence between racialized groups to violence between social classes to violence between genders. The Kingdom of God is a promise of Peace, not violence, an inheritance of Reconciliation not militarism. God can only be glorified when peace on earth is enjoyed by the people of God, especially women and children, minorities and the vulnerable.

Integrity of Creation¹⁷

This language needs to be understood as an alternative discourse to the dominant dominion theology. Many of us look to the book of Genesis for a starting point on ecological issues. Dominion theology starts at the same place but elevates the role of human beings in the management of world resources. This has often led to the proposition that the only thing important in God's sight is the struggle of human beings. From this point of view humans represent the apex or culmination of creation.

Integrity of creation language sees things differently. We are part of creation but all of creation bears the marks of God. The Kingdom of God includes the whole of creation which sighs together in anticipation of the coming reign of Peace. The redemption of the world is a redemption of the whole world not an extraction of human beings away from the world.

Conclusion

Finally, I will leave you with three questions:

1. What will happen if we do nothing?

We can ask that question as churches or as people with regard to globalization. Something very clearly will happen. Those who want to regulate the global economy will do so. The Pacific islands will be flooded, for example.

2. What will happen if we respond as individuals? Or Individual churches?

We might be able to make some difference. However, since the advocates of Economic Globalization have organized collectively, it is unlikely we will have the strength to successfully resist.

3. What could happen if we decide to respond together?

We have met this challenge before in relation to the movement against Apartheid. We have proved it is possible to assemble serious resistance. We could have a very different future. But only if we respond together.

Notes

¹ This paper was originally presented to an International Consultation sponsored by the World Council of Churches. The purpose of the consultation was to provide an opportunity to respond to a document prepared by the Pacific Council of Churches entitled "The Island of Hope: The Pacific Churches' Response to Economic Globalization", 2001.

² John Havea, 'The Future Stands Between Here and There: Toward an Is-Land(ic) Hermeneutics,' *Pacific Journal of Theology*, Series II No. 13, 1995. p. 63

³ Havea, p. 64

⁴ See William Stringfellow, *An Ethic for Christians and other Aliens in a Strange*

- Land*, Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1973.
- ⁵ See Roger Hutchinson, *Prophets, Pastors and Public Choices: Canadian Churches and the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Debate*, Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1992.
- ⁶ John Dillon, in a presentation to ACC General Synod, Waterloo, 2001 citing an executive of a global corporation.
- ⁷ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1944.
- ⁸ For more on how Transnational Corporations seek to control their environment see David Korten *When Corporations Rule the World*, West Hartford, Conn.: Kumarian Press, 1996.
- ⁹ See Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: literary-feminist readings of Biblical narrative*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.
- ¹⁰ Many commentators have described this story as one which described an 'inverted world'. For one such description see Stuart Lasine's "Guest and Host in Judges 19: Lot's Hospitality in an Inverted World", *JSOT* 29 (1984) 37-59 See esp. note 1.
- ¹¹ "The anonymity of the victimized woman, the unbearable horror of the story, the disturbing gender aspect of the horror, and the ambiguous moral status of the Levite, make for a massive repression of this story..." Mieke Bal, "Body-Politic", in Mieke Bal, *On Meaning-Making: Essays in Semiotics*, Sonoma, California: Polebridge Press, 1994. p. 270.
- ¹² For more on this mechanism see Erich Neumann, *Depth Psychology and a New Ethic*, Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1990.
- ¹³ Proceedings of the World Council of Churches, Harare Assembly, 1998.
- ¹⁴ "The test which it [the Church] should apply to policies and programmes is not that of economic "efficiency but of personal welfare." Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work in Stockholm, 1925 as quoted in C. Mulholland (ed.) *Ecumenical Reflections on Political Economy*, Geneva: WCC, 1988 p.30.
- ¹⁵ See Paul Bock, *In Search of a Responsible World Society: the social teachings of the World Council of Churches*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974.
- ¹⁶ See D. Preman Niles, *Resisting the Threats to Life: covenanting for justice, peace and the integrity of creation*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1989.
- ¹⁷ See Larry Rasmussen, *Earth Community, Earth Ethics*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1996

Discussion

- You said the OT teaches from negative experiences. Is that your general belief, or just for this presentation?
- I am not convinced by the alternative, I want a concrete example of how we can take concrete action?
- We are dealing with external debt. Will you help us with the dilemma of borrowing the external debt or borrowing the life?
- The world is ruled by economy, and Marxism and neo-liberalism are both economy based. We should remember the world economy and *oikoumene* means house building, both in terms of this life and salvation. Even if we base our discussion on the fact that economy plays a central role in society, we should always bear in mind as Christians the house building concept which includes the spiritual dimension of life. *Oikoumene* – administering hope for salvation and spiritual aspects of people's existence.
- What do you think about the Reformed Churches' statement that this is a point of confession? Is it possible for a Christian to be part of this system or is it a *kairos* where we cannot be part of the system because it touches our Christian values?
- The succinct distinction you made between moral, immoral and amoral is a good foundation for ethical discourse on market economy. We churches deal with this issue of globalisation because the market does not have the capacity to deal with the moral issues within itself.
- Can I still call myself Christian if I engage in competition and domination? I would like examples of how we talk to people who believe that they are Christians, yet they promote this kind of system.
- When we studied economics we were told that there is nothing good and bad. What is 'good' for you is up to you, and what you call 'bad' may be 'good' for me. That is the logic of WB and IMF, who do not want a discussion on ethics in their operations. They say they want to do something 'good', i.e., to remove poverty, but

operationally they are doing something 'bad'. Where do we say this is 'bad' and therefore immoral?

- If we come together as your last question suggests, what would their reaction probably be? It might be the same story as that of the rich young man that we heard about in our Bible study this morning? "I have done all this on Christian ethics; I have shared my wealth for the life of the churches?" "But there is only one thing you have not done, that is to sell all your properties, give that money to the poor to restore the forest which you destroyed with your companies and manufacturing." Would not the same thing happen again?
- Globalization has a non-market effect that can be detrimental to marginalized groups. More than 50% of the time is produced in the household economy and only 20% in the globalised, state economy. If it is true that the household economy is very important, why cannot you not say that the moral memory be used as an alternative for what you said is amoral in the globalised economy?
- Is the acquisition of property an immoral act?
- "For each according to his ability and needs" – this is the basic ethic of communism. How do you reconcile that in the context of globalization?
- In the WCC 6th criteria, they have omitted freedom. Freedom of capitalism is encouraging globalization, but what about the freedom of the Pacific to live a long, happy life; freedom to know, educational freedom? Freedom as an intrinsic value is left out.

Presenter's Responses

- *Why isn't freedom on the list?* The list was not meant to be exhaustive or exclusive but an identification of the major themes of WCC over the last 40 years.
- *Is the acquisition of property a moral act?* This is a question that all Christians must struggle with. There are different kinds of property. If I go into a Fijian village, point to a *bure* and ask, "Is that your

house,” and they say, “Yes,” in that sense that is their property. But the concept of property is flexible in a Fijian village. It does not mean others may not make use of that *bure*. Social expectations govern who could use it. We were in the President’s village, we were in his *bure* and there were clearly important restrictions on who could use that *bure*, but it is part of the community and people are not excluded in every circumstance from using it. The capitalist regime dictates that we have property boundaries without limits. These boundaries are being extended. As a Canadian we failed the world community when we collapsed under American pressure and changed our drug patent legislation to extend the exclusive use of patents from 7 to 12 and then to 20 years. Countries had copied Canadian legislation which restricted exclusive property rights to only 7 years. Things which were not property, like DNA, are now property which can be owned. I can own it and you can’t, even though it might be in your body.

- Household economics as an alternative. Marilyn Waring from New Zealand has done important research on household economies and on strategy to identify the effects of market changes on non-market activity. Formal economists are accustomed to counting money as a way of monitoring economic change. She recommends that you count time. Carrying water, gathering firewood, these are ways in which you can measure the change of market activity in non-market patterns. This would be an important protection for those nations that have a significant subsistence. The more you can protect your subsistence economy the better. Industrial countries are trying to protect social welfare systems, and small countries should protect their subsistence economy.
- The idea that economics can and should be value-free is a deception — value-free means refusal to acknowledge when values are expressed. We need to use the technique of literary critics who analyze languages in order to see how language changes, and when it changes that is when values are being expressed. Economists don’t talk about food, they talk about commodities. It might be computer chips or lima beans; whether it goes into a computer or into a stomach doesn’t matter to economists. Children are not

viewed by economists as people, but as a consumer choice. In globalization you are not citizens, you are consumers or producers. 'Citizen' is a political category, one who participates in decision-making. A consumer purchases Coke or Pepsi. The millions and millions who do not belong to the formal market economy are left out of this equation. If you exist on subsistence you don't produce or consume so you don't count. Democracy is messy and inefficient, according to globalisation. Human rights get in the way of investment.

- Common good is a discourse as old as Christianity, but not now heard as good is not singular. It is not the good, but goods and goods are produced. The common heritage of nature is now private property that you and I haven't claimed yet! The big lie was that the North American continent was empty land, and between three and ten million people were imagined away. Analyze language to find where the values are.
- I think about the biblical references to the rich young man, and also to passing a camel through the eye of a needle. Sometimes we are overwhelmed with trying to pass this camel through the eye, but God has put the whole world in a mustard seed! Maybe we think of that as a metaphor, but it is also a scientific truth. I was asked whether I am optimistic or pessimistic about what we can do. I am pessimistic, the forces are great. But if you ask whether I have hope, then you are asking me a question of faith. Do I think God is with us? I say 'yes,' God is with us, and so I have hope.
- How we respond to people who engage in activities of domination and believe they are Christian, and the *Processus Confessionis* are related questions. The apartheid experience in South Africa was that people who identified themselves as Christian thought, 'We can work with this; it is not as bad as you think.' Gradually they build a consensus within the whole Christian world that it was not possible to support apartheid and be Christian. It took a long time but it came. International debt is an outrage before God. Is it possible to be a Christian and to defend the debt? I think it is not possible; we are deceiving ourselves. This is why the churches engage in a campaign of Jubilee, and remind ourselves there are

limits to repayment of debt. Do I wait for the Jubilee to come? Peru said they were going to default on the debt, and the Western bankers had a collective 'heart attack,' because if they default, then the banks will go under. Personally I think that the Western European and American countries are divided so there is no collective action on the part of the indebted countries. The big debtors are the western industrialized powers. Where is the relationship between economic and environmental debt and can this be linked economically?

- I am not saying all Old Testament stories teach by negative example, but it is a recognized Jewish interpretation.

Question:

- Integration and simultaneous disintegration. Integration is too good a word for describing this process. How should Christian ethics deal with the totalitarian imperialism? The creation stories in Genesis were written in a context of Babylonian imperialism, Exodus in Egyptian imperialism, Christianity in *Pax Romana*, Roman imperialism. We are facing imperialistic economies – what is your recommendation to Christian ethics in today's evident totalitarian imperialism around globalization. I need a stronger ethic than what you have described.
- *Answer:* I tried to introduce the concept of contradiction. The most recent phenomena was the complicity of the Christian church missionaries as agents of Western domination. The imperialism of the last 300–500 years is the only place I can start. I think there is a contradiction within Christian tradition, because there is something imperial about monotheism, one God. Biblical tradition and the diverse spirituality of people is an ambiguous inheritance with regard to imperialism. I am a disciple of the Hungarian historian Karl Polanyi, writing in 1944 about the social response to the industrial revolution. The social devastation of the industrial revolution was so great that in order for society to survive it had to reinvent itself. The union movement, modern social welfare, pension schemes, are examples of reinvention in relationship to

the economy. We are in that kind of period again where we are beginning to reinvent ourselves globally. My response on imperialism is solidarity because of our ambiguous inheritance. We should stand with the victims and the excluded. Only in those places will the responses come that will enable us to survive.

Statement of the Conference

The Island of Hope

— An Alternative to

Economic Globalisation

As representatives of fifty-one churches, ecumenical and civil society organisations, from twenty-nine countries, we met in Nadi, Fiji from August 12-16 at a Global Conference on Economic Globalisation: The Island of Hope. We share the conviction of the Pacific Churches and commit ourselves to this vision as well:

*Spirituality, family life, traditional economy, cultural values, mutual care and respect are components of the concept of the Island of Hope which prioritises relationships, celebrate quality of life and values human beings and creation over the production of things. The Island of Hope is an alternative to the project of economic globalisation which entails domination through an unjust economic system.*¹

Introduction

1. As we begin the millennium the churches find themselves confronted by the consequences of the process of economic globalisation. It has become apparent to many of us that the negative aspects of economic globalisation are incompatible with the reign of God and our discipleship with Christ. There is something seriously wrong with an economic system that

produces so much suffering and poverty, exploitation of labour and widespread environmental devastation.

2. This global conference met in the Pacific Island of Fiji at the invitation of the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC). Central to the meeting was the presentation of a document called 'The Island of Hope' that will be distributed by the WCC together with this statement. For the Pacific Churches "The Island of Hope" represents life-centred values deeply rooted in Pacific communities, which provide an orientation for a just and sustainable economy and a life of dignity.
3. Today the ecumenical movement is faced with a profound challenge. This challenge is posed by a competing vision to that of *oikoumene*, the unity of humankind and the whole inhabited earth². This competing vision is part and parcel of economic globalisation. In its negative effects economic globalisation becomes an expression of the emerging global system of domination, of one ideology, one political system, one international coalition of the wealthy and the powerful.
4. The Christian vision of One World is a vision of compassion for the weak and the marginalized. It is a vision of cooperation with all people of goodwill in defence of creation. It is a vision of solidarity with those forced to survive the tidal waves of injustice sweeping across our globe.
5. Churches and many people have come to recognise that this is a 'kairos'³ - a time for resistance and a time for alternatives. It is a time for the churches to offer prophetic guidance and leadership to the world. In order to do this the WCC has been consulting its member churches around the world to find acceptable alternatives. Other consultations in Bangkok and Budapest helped churches to better understand and challenge not only the logic of economic globalisation, but also the underlying paradigm, the major actors, and the loss of sovereignty and democratic control it entails. In Fiji we were inspired by "The Island of Hope" presented to us by the churches of the Pacific Islands.

Vision

6. The "Island of Hope" is a fitting expression of the global, ecumenical concept of the Kingdom of God in the Pacific context. Jesus called us into this Kingdom of God. God's inheritance is one of generosity and reciprocity and the sharing of communal resources. It requires hospitality to the stranger and the affirmation of all human beings as sisters and brothers in the family of God.
7. The values of globalisation as the people of the Pacific experience them, stand in stark contrast to the values of the Kingdom taught by Jesus⁴, while the traditional values of the Pacific Island societies are similar to Kingdom values.
8. "The Island of Hope" presents a vision that is partly ideal and partly real. Its strength lies in the fact that the elements described in "The Island of Hope" still continue to exist in the Pacific today. They are not a result of a dream but are actual viable alternatives to globalisation that have been lived out and sustained for generations in Pacific Island societies. They may be difficult at times but they are certainly possible.
9. We are not saying that the traditional values of Pacific Island societies are identical with the Kingdom of God as preached by Jesus. We are all too conscious that negative forces were also at work and traditional ideals were not always lived out in Pacific societies. However, if the best of Pacific's lived traditions are put together, they offer viable alternatives to the destructive ways associated with globalisation.
10. "The Island of Hope" is life-centred, affirming the very soul of the Pacific Islanders. The concepts of *whenua*, *fenua*, *enua*, *vanua*⁵ all mean that the land is the people's identity, life and soul. Land is people, resources, cultures, beliefs, spirituality, languages, social systems, and the sea. The practical outcome of this understanding is communitarian sharing and distribution of resources with the absence of the selfish pursuit of wealth. While Western economics revolve around profit and economic growth, the

traditional economies of the Pacific are concerned with people and the total quality of their lives; caring and concern for others within the extended families and compassion for all people, especially for the sick and elderly are values of the communities; respect, hospitality, generosity, and forgiveness are other marks of the traditional communities. Nobody is excluded.

11. The land, the sea and people are integral parts of one entity. Subsistence farming, a sustainable agriculture and the sensitivity of the sacredness of the trees and the sea are part of their identity. While traditionally these values operated mainly within the context of the wider family or clan, Jesus challenges us to extend them to all, because we are all members of the family of God.
12. Over many years the World Council of Church has articulated criteria to help its members discern the difference between islands of hope and reefs of despair. In the presentation on the Island of Hope we recognise our own ecumenical journey. For example:
 - Responsibility – one of the oldest traditions of the Christian Church is that power and privilege carries equivalent social responsibility. The most powerful people, churches, nations and corporations bear the most responsibility for addressing the problems of the world. It is also true that we must be accountable for the consequences of our actions.
 - Justice – The Christian Churches follow Jesus Christ and the Prophetic tradition in demanding a right relationship with God and with our neighbours. This means recognising and defending the human rights of all God's children and an equitable sharing of all the world's resources.
 - Participation – The dignity of every person is compromised without the right to participate in decisions which affect them. The World Council of Churches has consistently supported these historic struggles.
 - Sustainability – Human technological capacity is struggling with the sin of pride by refusing to acknowledge that only God is without limits. The ecological limits of the globe are being challenged as well as the social limits of human communities.

- Peace – The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of Peace, not violence, a Kingdom of Reconciliation not militarism. God can only be glorified when peace on earth is enjoyed by the people of God, especially women and children, minorities and the vulnerable.
 - Integrity of Creation – The Kingdom of God includes the whole of creation which sighs together in anticipation of the coming reign of Peace.
13. Our challenge today is to discern whether the current vision of economic globalisation represents a world of compassion or indifference, a world of solidarity or domination and oppression, an ocean of hope or despair. The Island of Hope challenges us to recognise God's presence in all of the cultures of the world. When we affirm the integrity of local culture, we resist the temptation to stand alone, each on our own island, for as disciples of Christ we are called to stand together.

Economic Globalisation: Meaning and Logic

14. Economic globalisation has different meanings for different people, groups and communities. Highlighting the basic characteristics, we may define economic globalisation as a process of:
- Transnationalisation of capital, most prominently ensuring the mobility of finance capital round the globe, round the clock;
 - Centralisation of capital via mergers and acquisitions;
 - Transnationalisation of production, e.g. the sales of foreign affiliates of transnational corporations (TNCs) is over \$14 trillion as against an export trade of just half of it;
 - Standardisation of consumer tastes;
 - Legitimisation of the process by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and World Trade Organisation (WTO).

- Unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of self-appointed 'rulers' in the economy, the media and other spheres of life without legitimisation by democratic processes.
15. The theoretical rationale of this process is rooted in the assumptions of neo-classical economics. Making no reference to basic needs of the community, this economic paradigm assumes that wants are unlimited, while the means to satisfy them are limited. The most efficient allocation of these scarce resources is secured through setting the prices via the competitive market mechanism. The recurring theme of IMF, World Bank, WTO literature is summed up in the expression, 'set prices right'. Given this organising principle, the earth's resources become raw materials and the global commons, such as the ocean, atmosphere, forests and even individual labour power are subordinated to capital.

Indeed, it legitimises exclusion and non-participation of the weak and less endowed by its own logic. It rationalises expansion unto the end of the earth and has coined such widely used phrases like 'developed countries', 'developing countries', 'least developed countries' and so on. The big truth that development of a community is culturally rooted is simply thrown overboard. Now what are the consequences?

The impact

16. In the midst of increasing plenty, rapid technological advancement, export-led growth (devaluation, export-zones etc.), we encounter deepening poverty, including unemployment ("jobless" growth), intolerable inequality, destruction of life-support systems and continuing exclusion and marginalisation. The number of absolute poor in South Asia has doubled in less than three decades. Although poverty has decreased in East Asia, the number of absolute poor is around 278 million, bigger than the size of USA's population.

Africa and its people exemplify the worst case of exclusion and

deprivation. Environmental degradation puts additional pressure on poor communities. Africa has a large refugee population in distress. The situation is further aggravated by the HIV/Aids pandemic. The number of people who earn less than one dollar per day is over 1.5 billion of which 70% are women.

People in the industrial countries also increasingly become victims of economic globalisation. The rate of unemployed people, poor people, street children is also growing in highly industrialised countries. In the field of employment, the key words under economic globalisation regime are informalisation, casualisation and feminisation of labour. Typical is the case of garment industry where mostly women (90%) are working under very exploitative conditions. This industry can be found wherever wages are low, including Fiji.

17. While developing countries sink deeper and deeper into debt, the value of finance capital transactions delinked from production in a year is over 600 trillion dollars per annum. This game continues merrily although the East Asia crisis is still not yet over, and Argentina, Turkey, Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Indonesia are today facing an acute foreign exchange crisis and debt problems. This is to be seen along with the fact that the estimated reverse flow of resources to the North by way of debt repayment, royalties, brain drain, adverse terms of trade is over \$500 billion.
18. Under the rules of WTO regime, but with the whip of sanctions held before them, the developing countries face food insecurity, depressing agricultural prices and marginalisation of small farmer categories. Subsidies to inputs, operating costs, preferential user charges, public distribution system are "actionable categories", under the WTO Agreements. The interests of developing countries, which are home to the vast majority of known species and thus very rich in their biodiversity, cannot be served under the regime of the Agreement on Trade Related Property Rights (TRIPs). As it is today, TRIPs can serve only corporate interests such as biotech industries and corporate plant breeders.
19. Through their voting power and control, USA⁶ and other G7⁷ countries manage the IMF and WB and the economic and

financial management in a substantial measure. The US dollar remains the effective reserve currency and international media of exchange. Being the unchallenged super power backed by the military and support of G-7, USA is virtually the policeman of the world and controls the empire of finance capital. The impact of economic globalisation cannot be evaluated independently of the policies of this super power.

20. All these have to be seen and understood in the background of the crisis of governance the nation-states of the world encounter today. While they have to roll back their intervention in favour of the private sector, which includes even cutting expenditure on vital areas like education, health or social security, or abdicating responsibility in terms of public utilities and governing them efficiently the people of the developing world face their moment of truth.

21. Youth in particular are affected by the negative impacts of economic globalisation.

The lack of new jobs hurts the young first. The loss of jobs make the young vulnerable to violence, drugs and even suicide. Social and environmental deterioration is the struggle for upcoming generations and threatens their future. If youth lose their hope, then the whole society will suffer.

22. Women are the most victims of globalisation in the North and in the South because they do most of the unpaid work in the informal sector and the hardest and lowest work in the formal sector. Women often accept any job to help their families to survive. This is misused by the TNCs to undermine efforts regarding the implementation of social standards in their own operations.

23. The devastating social effects are accompanied by destruction of the natural environment. The United States, the single largest polluter alone accounts for 25 % of world's total carbon emissions. Global warming is a threat to communities all around the world. People in Africa experience changing rainfall patterns with droughts on the one hand and devastating floods on the

other. The Pacific islands are especially vulnerable. They contribute only 0,6% to the greenhouse gas emissions, yet they will sink, if people in other parts of the world and especially in the most polluting countries in the North do not act. The US government, however, and corporations active in mining, car production and the energy sector, work actively against even modest measures to decrease greenhouse gas emission proposed by the Kyoto protocol of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Making a choice

24. "Serve God not Mammon" (cf. Mt 6:24) was the title of the message of the Budapest consultation of Churches in Central and Eastern Europe in June 2001. The ethics of economic globalisation is an ethics of competition and domination, which favours individualism and fosters consumerism at the expense of social cohesion and sustainability of the community of life. The ethics of "The Island of Hope" is based on the deep respect for the whole community of life. It fosters a culture of sharing and caring, based on justice. Its values reflect God's care for creation and Christ's teaching to love one another and do justice to the poor.
25. Following Christ, we must make a choice. We oppose the ethics of economic globalisation and join others who do the same. This choice is costly. It requires us to share what we have. It demands of us a commitment to give up what binds us to the system that exploits and enslaves our sisters and brothers (Mk 10: 17-31). It leads into conflict and perhaps into persecution (Mk 10:32-34). Making this choice is a question of life and death.
26. We are obliged to chose between serving God or Mammon, power or people. Everyone, politicians and business people included, are responsible for the consequences of their actions. We will be held accountable by the people who suffer the consequences. We have a chance to turn around (Mt 6:12.13). We also hear the promise of the Gospel that choosing life will create an alternative

and truly ecumenical community of sharing and solidarity (Mt 14:13-21; Acts 2:41-47) in response to the prayer “that all may be one as we are one” (Joh 17:11).

27. The project of economic globalisation pretends with religious fervour that economic growth, free flow of capital and the allocation of resources and goods through the market mechanism serve the common good. But the market as an instrument is amoral and does not automatically lead to more justice and quality of life. It rather aggravates existing inequality and unequal distribution of power and leads to massive exclusion and environmental destruction. This is the reason why resistance and alternatives become essential and urgent.
28. The movement to struggle against economic globalisation is growing. There are many positive examples for action taken by people in the North and South. This movement is confronted with the powerful forces of economic globalisation that are promoted by global media, massive advertisement for consumer goods and even military presence and interventions. The existing alternatives, however, motivate and inspire the movement to continue its struggle.

Alternatives

29. Churches and communities are defending, affirming and announcing that solidarity and love among human beings are central values in life. These values, although they are not priced at the Market, have the strength of God. Solidarity with the Pacific churches and people promoting “The Island of Hope” is an expression of our common struggle and our common search for alternatives to face economic globalisation. “The Island of Hope” and the alternatives inspired by it resonate all around the world:

From Africa we heard about the concept of “UBUNTU”; going back into ourselves and the knowledge of our communities, to find solutions to problems, through sharing traditional values of

inclusiveness, sense of community, reconciliation, participation, dialogue, partnership, hospitality and fellowship. UBUNTU inspires work for a people-centred economy, that provides food security, the exchange of goods and services, especially by women.

- Participants from Asia showed us the concepts of “gotong-royong” (togetherness), in Indonesia, “bayanihan” (collective living), in the Phillipines, “panchasila” (five principles of peaceful living), in India, “daedong yundae” (great solidarity), in Korea, against the culture of domination, competition and individualism, taught by economic globalisation. Asia’s richness has secured the food and basic needs of the developed countries, leaving people to share the leftovers among themselves. Asia has a potential but neglected and exploited domestic economy that needs to be recovered, protected and maximised
- Sharing and attending to one another’s needs is a central element in the lives of the Pacific people as stated in “The Island of Hope”. Co-operation and partnership recognising mutual interdependence is an alternative to economic globalisation based on individualism and dominance. Subsistence economy is still important for the life of the people and merits much more attention and support compared to the destructive effects of the monetarised economy and the spirit of competition that accompanies it.
- Western European and Canadian participants underlined the importance of sharing and interdependence in churches’ networks world-wide. Examples were presented of people active in advocacy campaigns and developing alternatives to the consumerist lifestyle, e.g. fair trade and ecological products, or more ecological transport systems. Highlighted were also alternative forms of financial investments like oikocredit and others, which are supported by people in industrialised countries.
- The group from Central and Eastern Europe pointed to the importance of protecting the spiritual heritage of the countries in the region, caring for family as a basic unit of society and

- encouraging the value of sharing.
- Participants from Latin America and the Caribbean reminded us about communal values shared by their Indigenous cultures. Building on their teachings, poor and unemployed develop alternatives such as bartering systems, communal-collective labour, and the sharing of food. They practice economies of solidarity.
30. We were also reminded of the vital contributions of women's networks that oppose male domination entrenched in economic oppression. We heard of the enormous experience of Indigenous Peoples' communities all around the world that live alternatives of collective labour, bartering and sharing of food and shelter as values opposed to private-corporate neo-liberalism. We also want to express our appreciation for the important contributions of the youth participants in our meeting and for the document of the youth consultation on "The Island of Hope" that preceded our consultation. Youth celebrates the joy of dreaming and acting passionately to overcome selfishness and isolation, deadly values brought up by economic globalisation.
 31. The rich sharing between the regions shows that there are many different forms of life in community and economies helping people to survive and live in dignity. Christianity had to learn the hard way that the good news of the Gospel has to be contextualised in order to be meaningful for God's people in their diversity. The same applies to the economy. The economy is to serve and not to dominate the society. The concrete shape needs to be different according to the social, cultural, environmental and historical conditions of societies and their value systems. In each situation it has uniquely to be decided, which kind of political framework and intervention is necessary to make the economy function, how to find the right balance between state, communal and private initiatives, between local and global orientation, production and consumption.
 32. Given the formidable challenges thrown up by economic globalisation, alternative strategies have to be envisaged on three levels: long term, medium term and short term. Keeping the vision

of a just society and world order as against the corporate utopia now under way, the following measures were discussed during the meeting:

- a) Campaign to restructure global institutions based on a global constituent assembly from which a peoples' assembly and new financial architecture will be created;
- b) Vital issues like global accumulation without responsibility, transparency and accountability to the global community, drug trafficking and money laundering, rampant sex tourism including child prostitution, globalisation of crime, global gambling and speculation, unjust international division of labour, widening inequality of income, should engage the agenda of any UN assembly;
- c) The dominant technological paradigm that keeps people redundant must yield to one that absorbs more labour and less pollution. This is the value of a new world order.

Medium term

- a) Work for local self government and participatory governance;
 - b) A tax on incoming finance capital and a fund to provide for better health for all.
33. "The Island of Hope," as we experienced it during these days, calls the churches and the ecumenical organisations to:
1. Strengthen and continue the process of clarification, critique and work on proposing alternatives to economic globalisation.
 2. Work on a theology of reconstruction and deconstruction that promotes communities of life and wholeness, which *affirm human dignity and build confidence.*
 3. Be fully involved in the struggles of the people, especially churches that are rooted in communities where the poor and the deprived live.

4. Support regions in their own efforts and outcomes and the exchange among them..
5. Call on the churches to provide opportunities for young people to be educated on the implications and effects of a globalised economy so that young people can strengthen their faith, values and dreams and bring them to reality.
6. Call on the youth of the world to participate and be active on initiatives by churches and the ecumenical movement. Their gifts as youth are needed in the struggle for justice and abundant life
7. Make sure that the Decade to Overcome Violence addresses the economic root causes of violence in its many forms.
8. Co-operate with social movements, such as World Social Forum, Focus on Global South, Third World Network, Jubilee South and others.
9. Encourage the development of traditional economies. Subsistence economies, for instance, need to be re-evaluated and seen as partial alternatives to globalisation-especially in developing countries. Subsistence production ensures self-sufficiency, sustainability, food security, livelihood for many and it is important that the existence of a dual economy (cash/subsistence) be acknowledged and applauded. The cash economy alone does not have to dominate the world.
10. Organise encounters with International Financial Institutions and the World Trade Organisation, not focusing on how to make the prevailing economic model work, but how to make it different.
11. Work for radical changes in current economic systems that:
 - a. Put people first.
 - b. Restore national and people's control over development.
 - c. End protectionism in the world's richest countries.
 - d. Give priority to the poor.
 - e. Make multinationals accountable and transparent to civil

- society
- f. Make international organisations (IMF, World Bank, WTO) subject to democratic decision-making.
 - g. Build democratic space for genuine debate.
 - h. Regulate financial transactions with instruments that avoid flying capitals or speculation, such as currency transaction tax.
- 12. Help in the enforcing of the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change. Every country is responsible on reducing air pollution.
 - 13. Learn from the experience of the Programme to Combat Racism (PCR) and work towards an Exxon Boycott⁸ as a method of the work on climate change.

Affirmation of the Island of Hope

- 34. The Pacific Islander delegates have called the churches and ecumenical organisations to be in solidarity and participate in the prophetic voice of the Island of Hope. They have begun to work for an alternative to economic globalisation with the small Pacific Islands coming together in solidarity. World-wide partnership in solidarity, which is a reflection of the triune God's partnership, will set free unthinkable potential and positive transformation in the world.
- 35. The representatives of different regions brought together by the WCC have received the Pacific Churches' response to economic globalisation: Island of Hope. They expressed their thanksgiving and our solidarity with the people and churches in the Pacific. The document on the Island of Hope will be sent to churches and ecumenical organisations all around the world together with this report.
- 36. The sharing of stories and values of the Pacific not only inspired all of us together but challenged everybody to accompany the

Pacific people in their struggle against injustice. This meeting has helped all of us to better understand the struggle of the people in the Pacific region and also to see how well Pacific values resonate in other parts of the world. We want to assure the people of the Pacific that their struggle is our struggle and their concern is our concern.

Notes

- ¹ From the Island of Hope : The Pacific Churches Response to Economic Globalisation, p. 13
- ² *Oikoumene* is the Greek word for the whole inhabited earth, God's household of life; the word *oikos* means house or household so that economy is about the ordering of the household and ecology about its logic.
- ³ *Kairos* is another Greek word for the right moment, a moment of crisis and a chance for something new to begin, when a clear Christian witness is required. The "*kairos* document" was a wake up call in the struggle against apartheid.
- ⁴ cf. Island of Hope document p.12
- ⁵ This is a common word, only differently pronounced in different Pacific languages.
- ⁶ Armed with Super 301 and Special 301, the USA puts itself virtually above WTO or other international regulatory mechanism.
- ⁷ USA, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy
- ⁸ Especially youth supported this initiative to boycott ExxonMobil by a number of Environmental NGO's, see www.stopesso.com

The Pacific Youth Perspective on Economic Globalisation

Introduction

"Christ is the island of hope, Christ is the island of hope!" is the call of the youth of the Pacific against the 'Tidal Wave' of economic globalisation. From the 9th to the 12th of August 2001, a Conference for the Youth of the Pacific on Globalisation was held at the Raffles Gateway Hotel, Fiji. The Pacific Council of Churches and World Council of Churches organised the conference to mobilise the Youth in the Pacific, to study and understand the consequences of globalisation. The conference has provided a venue for young people to find clarity, to critique, and identify alternatives to globalisation. We have had presentations on the impacts of globalisation in each of the countries present; we were introduced to the global economy through the "World Trade Game"; thematic presentations included global warming, culture, information technology, economic globalisation, alternatives to globalisation and project planning. Worship, song and prayer bound us together as we approached the difficult challenges of globalisation. The participants of the meeting were inspired to return to their countries to implement local projects.

Fifteen Pacific countries were represented in this Youth Conference. These Pacific countries were Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tonga, American Samoa, Marshall Islands, Tahiti, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and New Zealand. Our partner sister and brothers were from Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa. It is of great honour for the Youth from the Pacific to share our stories.

Global Warming

The emission of green house gasses mainly come from the developed countries such as USA and the European region. The developing world is only a minor source of greenhouse gas emission. Scientific reports give strong evidence that the increase in emission of green house gasses world-wide lead to climate changes. This has critical impacts for the world and the Pacific region in particular. It is expected that there will be a rise in temperature 1.5 – 6°C. This can cause stress in the fragile eco-systems of the Pacific such as the coral reefs. It will also lead to water expansion and ice melting at the polar caps. The result is expected to be a rise in sea level by 14 – 80 cm. With islands only 3 meters above sea level this is an existential threat for all life on the islands. The expected rise in sea level will cause erosion of soil, uprooting of plants and flooding taking away the island and then also the livelihood for the people.

The massive logging of the forests in Melanesia by Australian and Malaysian firms is reducing the capacity of the earth to reduce the level of CO₂.

Information Technology

After the colonial period the new technology has played a significant role in developing the communication systems. The introduction of television, Internet, telephone, mobiles, fax machines, has changed society and is rapidly affecting everyday life.

Development of communication has made sending and receiving information anywhere, anytime, quicker and easier. This gives the opportunity for us, to share our stories, identities, cultures and values with the rest of the world. There is an instant access to research, online training and continuation of studies. The Governments and

other institutions could improve their services through easily accessed information on the Internet.

Negative impacts brought by Internet are:

- The increasing and uncontrolled volume of global financial transactions and speculation from hour to hour which can lead to a collapse of markets and threaten economies.
- Some young people tend to be addicted to this medium which can expose them to pornographic material and sites.
- An obstacle to this expansion in communication is the lack of accessibility, caused by high costs both for connection and hardware. (\$1 FJ-\$8 FJ / hour for dial up connection). Many young people are therefore excluded from using Internet.

Culture

Islands in the Pacific have 'chiefs' in the villages. According to the traditions, becoming a chief is an honour after first having served the family, village, and the church. But this has slowly been neglected when the Islands started to receive aid and money from overseas. There was a foreigner who came to one of the islands with money to assist building a school in a village. In reward, the government honoured him a high chief title. This story went around the island and the people were frustrated because of the special treatment given to the foreigner. The 'chief' title seems to be worth nothing anymore to the people and this has created conflict among villagers. This shows how culture is fading away. It is indeed sad that this is happening to our culture.

Culture is the most precious thing the Pacific countries have, and we are very proud of it. Unfortunately, media and tourism have arrived at our shores; Western ways of living and thinking have influenced our native culture. Our youth has become accommodated and adjusted to new lifestyles. Now, we hardly see any islander wearing traditional clothing, living out their culture and speaking their language. The way of teaching and taking care of our children has changed. It hurts to see the diminishing of our culture.

Globalisation has also an impact on our Christian faith. Our young people are trapped into consumerism and influenced by violence in movies.

Economy

The ideology of economic globalisation teaches us that the integration of the economy of all countries into one global market, based on the belief that free trade/market and competition, would lead to the optimum good for all individuals. This ideology is designed and implemented by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and the World Trade Organisations. These are the big institutions that control the economy of the world.

The Economy in the Pacific Islands is facing the following challenges:

- Foreign firms enjoying the economic richness of the islands for their own interest: Australian and American firms getting the mines in Papua New Guinea and Nauru, Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese firms get the fish in the rich seashores of Polynesia, American and France doing their nuclear bomb testing in Tahiti and the Marshall Islands, France colonising New Caledonia, other Asian and foreign individuals are offered jobs, which are supposed to be for the local people.
- We recognise that tourism has provided employment. On the other hand, tourism is robbing the people of the Pacific of income generated on the islands, because foreign multi-corporations own the tourism-related businesses. The enticement of tourism also creates dispute of land ownership, causing friction and violence among landowners.
- Liberalisation of economies has resulted in import of products, such as apples and grapes, which are sold less expensive than fruits locally produced.
- Government-owned companies and services are being sold to the private sector. This privatisation is increasing the costs of services such as water, electricity, health, education, and imposing financial burden on the islander.
- Our governments have been influenced by WTO, WB and IMF to change our economic policies, resulting in less employment opportunities.
- All of the points stated show that foreign countries are undermining the sovereignty and the livelihood of the island countries.

Alternatives

From Genesis we are taught to be in charge of the whole creation of God.

So God created human beings, making them to be like him self. He created them male and female, blessed them and said, "Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds and all the wild animals."

Inspired by the words of God and the prayer of Jesus Christ "...that all may be one" (John 17:21), we commit to the following recommendations:

Education

- The Youth of the Pacific calls on the Churches to provide venues for young people to have a regular study on globalisation in the context of their own culture and tradition. This will strengthen their faith, values and culture amidst the impact of globalisation;
- The Youth of the Pacific calls on the government to transform the educational system to preserve and promote the values of the Pacific culture such as use of local language, and at the same time have access to the positive aspects of new technologies;

Climate Change

- The youth of the Pacific calls on the churches and governments to lobby and put pressure on the world's governments to implement the Kyoto protocol;
- The youth of the Pacific calls on the churches to start initiatives addressing the concerns on ecological degradation and the impacts of global warming;
- The youth of the Pacific will take initiative to link with young people in other parts of the world working on the same cause.

Cooperation not Competition

- The youth of the Pacific calls on all the youth and the churches to lobby the government to advocate co-operative rather than competitive type of economy;
- The youth of the Pacific calls on the government to enact and strengthen government policies favouring sustainable development, the economy, and the stewardship of the Pacific resources.

Governments of the Pacific should:

- Put pressure internationally for cancelling of external debt;
- Demand having access to decision making in international organisations.

Being a Church in the Pacific

- The youth of the Pacific calls on the churches and government to live out values of equality, justice, peace, and the respect of our diversity;
- While working for the unity of Churches in the pacific, we work for international solidarity sharing the same vision.

**LET CHRIST BE THE
ISLAND OF HOPE!**

Discussion on the presentations

- It is shocking that there are so few specific practical alternatives presented.
- Civil societies in Eastern Europe are only 10 years old and are competing rather than co-operating with the churches. Some are seen to have un-Christian values.
- Kyoto protocol – don't just follow it, be active to make sure it is really implemented..
- The youth mentioned that Asians take jobs that locals could do. Is this only in Fiji or Pacific wide?
- It is interesting that people see culture and also religion as alternatives to globalisation. This has not been fully developed. The World Bank is going to open up their department for spirituality — they take everything we have and make it their's.
- How do we share power and who owns power?

Moderator's summary:

- We recognize that that globalisation is not a new phenomenon but a new manifestation of a long process of economic relationships, characterized by injustice.
- The ecumenical movement has been engaged for a very long time in various initiatives in different parts of the world.
- The present economic globalisation has attracted attention from churches, and confessional families searching for alternatives. One critical thing that came out of each of the ecumenical groups, including the youth presentation is a strong theological premise upon which a proposal for alternatives is based. We need to define that theological basis.
- It is difficult to come up with concrete initiatives and alternatives. There is the role of religion in development and culture— the

anthropocentric, secularist approach is now discarded by exponents of globalisation, even World Bank. We as believers must come out with something about the place and the role of faith and culture in social development.

- The youth have pointed us in the directions they want us to discuss, climate change, trade, domination.
- The WB and IMF have teams working on the role of religion in development. The Anglican Church is working with them. The Bush regime in USA has faith-based initiatives that are informing the discussions in America. Where are we ourselves in this process?

ISLAND OF HOPE

THE PACIFIC CHURCHES'

RESPONSE ON

ALTERNATIVES TO ECONOMIC

GLOBALISATION

1. Concept of the Island of Hope
2. A Pacific Understanding of Economic Globalisation
3. The Critique
4. Ecumenical Alternative to Economic Globalisation
5. Impact on the Pacific
 - Social
 - Political
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 - Economic
6. What Motivates the Church to Speak Out on Globalisation?
A Theological Assessment of Globalisation.
7. The Island of Hope: The Pacific Response to Economic Globalisation
 - a. Sprituality
 - b. The Pacific Family
 - c. Traditional Economy
 - d. Cultural Values
8. Conclusion.

1. Concept of the Island of Hope

The Island of Hope is an appropriate and contextual Pacific expression of the global concept of the Kingdom of God. The Island of Hope is a symbolic alternative to economic globalisation. It is a sturdy island of coconut trees, a haven in a fearsome ocean, providing life-saving water for Pacific people. On the Island of Hope the life-centred values of the *whenua*, *fenua*, *vanua*, *fonua*, *enua*, *aba*, which are illustrated in Acts 2:43-47, are affirmed in every day living. The image and symbol is that of a self-defined people in a well-marked location; a small coral or volcanic island withstanding the erosive forces of the ocean and of tidal waves; a group of people together braving the attacks of religio-social, political and economic tyrannies. The Island of Hope is an image of the Kingdom. The Island of Hope, like the Kingdom of God, is praise-worthy and unique, boundary-less and sought after.

On the Island of Hope, life is significant, valued and celebrated in the *Maneaba* (Kiribati), the *fale* (Samoa), the *kava* ceremony (Fiji and Tonga), the *bilum* and *Sam* Celebration (Papua New Guinea), and the nut celebration (Solomon Islands). Here everything is forgotten and the story begins. Here there is celebration of life over material wealth.

The Island of Hope is sacramental, self-contained, independent, and in tune with nature. It is an island marked by sharing and caring, to which people want to journey in order to celebrate life in all its fullness (Is 25:6). The Island of Hope has the “mana” to draw human beings together.

Pacific Islanders, with their varied cultures are not spared from the forces of globalization. Yet, in the face of its onslaught, the following defences remain firm and intact:

- The ethos of communal life and of communal economic and social relations;
- Communal ownership of resource bases;
- The strength of family and kinship ties;
- High levels of intra-community interaction and solidarity;

- A wealth of living languages, and of ceremonies, rituals and other practices rich in meaning;
- Traditional structures like fale, bure-Kalou [house for worship] and material culture producing both functional and exchange or gift items.

Biblical and theological references in the concept of the Island of Hope include the idea of smallness in partnership uniting people and making them strong: Jesus as the Island of Hope gave the whole world what it hopes for. Jesus' passion and the cross (resurrection) is the Island of Hope for humanity.

The concept of the Island of Hope juxtaposes the smallness of the Pacific Islands to the large continental landmasses of the Western world, epicentre of economic globalisation. The Island of Hope is biblical/theological as in the small in the leaven that makes the loaf of bread. Other biblical images of smallness provide helpful analogies of how the small, in partnership, can unite the people to be strong.

The Island of Hope offers an alternative to the negative effects of globalisation. The Island of Hope is founded on Godly values, as opposed to globalisation, which is erected on the value of material goods. The Island of Hope is sustainable, wholesome, peaceful and all-embracing, whereas globalisation is unsustainable, damaging, conflict-ridden, and excluding.

A Pacific Understanding of Economic Globalisation

Economic Globalisation can be best described in the Pacific as a tidal wave. When the tidal wave hits an island, it rolls over everything on the island. It may be awesome in its power but it strikes with a destructive force, maiming, killing or obliterating everything in its path. The tidal wave also brings new forms of life that sometimes threaten the pre-existing ways of life, including culture, values and even the Faith.

The tidal wave levels everything, laying it all equally to waste, reducing all without distinction to debris, very much like economic

globalisation. There is no allowance for difference or unpreparedness. Globalisation homogenises peoples and cultures, superimposing one on all others, subjugating all others to one, irrespective of differences in history and diversity of cultural heritages.

Economic globalisation is synonymous with colonialism. As one of the church leaders put it:

“We are just like a small boy in the sea who wants to come ashore but our big brother (colonialism) is there (on the beach). The big wave of colonialism overwhelms the little boy again and again. He tries always to put his hand out of the water but another big wave comes. This globalisation wave pushes him down, so what can he do? He cries for help. “I lift up my eyes to the hill, where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, maker of Heaven and earth” (Psalm 121). “There on the poplars we hide our harps for our captors ask us for songs. Our tormentors demand a song of joy. They say ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion’. How can we sing the song of the Lord while in a foreign land?” (Psalm 127). This story does not apply to us because we are in our own land. But how can we sing our song when we are on our land (but our captors say that we are not)?”

3. The Critique

Neo-liberal policies applied in the Pacific are based on the World Bank and the IMF promoted paradigm of “growth without limits”. In the Pacific, the reality shows that this paradigm provides opportunities to those who are already powerful. The powerful actors turn Globalisation into a political project. Neo-liberal economic theory glorifies private gain and profits at the expense of the environment and advocates sacrificing public goods at the expense of families and communities. It exalts and intensifies competition and facilitates a concentration of power. It ignores the importance of co-operation, mutuality and solidarity in the human community and creates new forms of exclusion and marginalization, affecting individuals, families

and whole communities. The ecumenical family has always condemned exclusion and marginalization.¹

According to the WCC Secretary General, the present extent of Globalisation, rather than being the manifestation of historical necessity, is to a large degree the consequence of deliberate policy decisions on the part of governments, reflecting neo-liberal economic theory.² As such, the neo-liberal paradigm cannot be civilized ; as contended by several peoples movements, it must be replaced by a people-centered paradigm.

4. Ecumenical Alternative to Economic Globalisation

It is essential for the WCC to continue advocating for a paradigm shift. Any initiative that promotes market reforms without a paradigm shift will continue to reproduce inequity and poverty. The elements of an alternative vision shall include:

- Encouraging countries to mobilize financial resources from within, instead of depending on Foreign Direct Investment;³
- Working out systems of income and land re-distribution to encourage internal markets;⁴
- De-emphasizing growth and maximizing equity in order to reduce environmental dis-equilibrium;
- Subjecting the private sector and the state to constant monitoring by civil society;
- Enshrining the principle of subsidiarity in economic life by encouraging the production of goods at community and national levels;
- Having a strategy that consciously subordinates the logic of the market and the pursuit of cost efficiency to the values of security, equity and social solidarity;

The World Council of Churches and the ecumenical family is searching for an approach which allows it to express development and economy in relation to our common vocation to live in right

relationship with our neighbours, with the earth, and with our creator. Such an approach includes these key affirmations:⁵

- A recognition that real value cannot be expressed in monetary terms and that life-and that which is essential to sustain it-cannot be commodified;
- A belief in the inherent dignity of every person and a prioritisation of creating the conditions for a dignified life;
- A commitment to an economy whose role is to serve the well being of the people and the health of the earth;
- A focus on the ultimate aim of economic life to nurture sustainable, just and participatory communities;
- A vision of 'global community' whose interdependence is not reduced to trade and markets;
- An acknowledgement of a common destiny as co-inhabitants of the one earth for which we all share responsibility and from which we should all equally benefit;
- A responsibility to uphold the right of all people –particularly the diverse communities of the poor and excluded- to participate in the economic, social and political decisions which affect them.

5. Impact on the Pacific

Much has been written on the effects of globalisation on the Pacific Islands and the intention here is not to re-write these excellent analyses but to highlight the impact of globalisation on the daily life of church members in the Pacific Islands.

Social

In recent years, there has been a marked increase in the number of families living beneath the poverty line. Many of the causes of this rise in poverty are inter-linked with the adoption by national governments of liberal policies promoting investment and competition to the detriment of social services such as education, health and social

welfare. There has also been a significant erosion in wages and working conditions, and industries that have enjoyed growth booms in recent years have been based on low wages and poor working conditions. In the garment industry in Fiji, most workers (who are predominantly women) receive a mere \$FJD 1.00 per hour, compared with \$10.00 per hour paid to comparable workers in Australia.

The Pacific Island countries have not defined poverty according to their realities and indeed political leaders and policy makers often deny that poverty exists in the region. Urbanisation is increasing rapidly throughout the Pacific because of perceived inequalities in opportunity and wealth between rural and urban areas but a growing number of those who come to towns do not find work, and are economically marginalised. In Fiji, the rising number of street children and the increasing numbers of young women seeking a living from prostitution are undeniable signs of growing poverty. In rural areas money is often in short supply and required to support many basic needs, such as sending children to school, accessing health care and medicines, improving living conditions, and meeting social obligations. The international definition of poverty (surviving on \$US1.00 per day) may not be applicable to the Pacific, where a large majority are engaged in subsistence or semi-subsistence livelihoods, but poverty does exist and is on the rise.

Churches in the Pacific have also contributed to making the poor poorer. Because it is the norm to raise money for the church, congregations are continuously drawn into giving to the church monies needed to pay for their children's school fees, uniforms and text books. Although it is not obligatory to give money to the church, social and peer pressure usually make it almost impossible not to do so if one wants to remain in the good books of the village or the community.

National economic policies aim for greater liberalisation and competition in the economy, ignoring their social and economic ramifications. Through the South Pacific Forum, Pacific Island leaders recently agreed to the establishment of a Pacific Islands Free Trade Area and have been proclaiming the benefits of such a free trade area. Yet, in a different meeting, a majority of the same leaders (the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders in February 2001, Honolulu) expressed serious doubts and apprehensions about the claimed

benefits of globalisation, and reflected on the option of not jumping on the globalisation bandwagon.

Other social problems encountered in Pacific countries today have been exacerbated by economic globalisation. In most Pacific Island Countries (PICs), there has been an increase in substance and drug abuse and regional routes are becoming increasingly vulnerable to international drug trafficking. The spread of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases has dramatically increased in recent years, despite considerable local initiatives to sensitise the population to preventive measures, and many consider HIV/AIDS a time bomb which will soon wreak havoc in the region. Teenage pregnancies, abortions and suicides are on the increase and the numbers of Pacific women who die each year from pregnancy-related conditions is very high (1,100 according to a 1993 UNICEF study).

Another social effect of globalisation evident in the PICs is seen in the increased intrusion of foreign lifestyles, tastes and values. Whilst most of them may be harmless, some of them do work to undermine Pacific society and values. The impact of media-promoted Coca Cola and Mac Donald 'cultures' on dietary patterns, family nutrition and health status in PICs has yet to be examined. These cultures, together with the culture of Western pop music, promote the fulfilment of individual and material desires and needs and directly conflict with traditional social values. As one church leader put it: "Youth live by the value 'if it feels good, just do it,' and forget the consequences. And in many of the Pacific Islands, the Church has not kept up with this change and are thus unable to prepare its members to meet the challenges of modern societies."

Globalisation is also forcing a change in religious practices. Niue tried to curb non-church activities on Sabbath, but were forced to compromise beliefs and practices as monthly supply vessels and air carriers arrive only on Sundays to service Niue, causing the delay or postponement of church services and work on Sundays.

Political

Within the last 10 years, countries in the Pacific region have attracted increasing international attention. A series of serious crises has indeed placed the Pacific region on the world map of political &

economic trouble spots. Professor Ron Crocombe has stated that internal threats, resulting from ethnic tension, land problems, economic disparities and a lack of confidence in governments' ability to solve the problems, pose the most serious security threat in the Pacific Island countries today. The political and constitutional crises in Fiji and Solomon Islands have demonstrated the very serious nature of internal security threats in the region. It could be argued that many of these threats have intensified as a consequence of the mixed impacts of 'reform' policies based on economic liberalism. These impacts include increasing economic disparities, new opportunities for rapid enrichment, increased competition for control of government and public funds, and reduced state capacity to effectively address social problems.

Inter-ethnic rivalry and conflict is sometimes the result of perceived inequalities between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' as a consequence of uneven development. In Solomon Islands, all development is concentrated in Honiara, and little is taking place in the rural areas. Some Malaitans saw the closing down of Honiara and its industries as a result of the inter-ethnic conflict, as 'leveling the playing field'.

Ecological

The Island Countries and territories of the Pacific occupy a vast area. They control more than 38 million square kilometres of the Pacific Ocean in their national waters and Exclusive Economic Zones, an area more than 3 times larger than the United States or China. Of this, less than 2% is land, scattered over thousands of large and small islands, making up 22 island nations and territories, and supporting an incredibly diverse range of traditional cultures all traditionally dependent upon natural resources for survival. The region has more rare endangered and threatened species per capita than anywhere else on earth. Its marine environment comprises an enormous and largely unexplored resource, including the most extensive and diverse reefs in the world, the largest tuna fishery, the deepest ocean trenches and the healthiest remaining populations of many globally-threatened species including whales, sea turtles, dugongs and saltwater crocodiles. Its high islands support large areas of intact rainforests, including

many unique species and communities of plants and animals found nowhere else in the world.

Some Pacific island people believe that their blessings have been taken away because they now exploit the environment for their own ends and not as God intended. They have lost their spiritual relationship with their natural environment, God's Holy Ground for God's purposes.

There is intensive exploitation, rather than sustainable management, of the Pacific's natural resources. Many of our people are lured by promises of large cash bonuses and easily forget the long term ramifications of such short-term gains. PICs continue to derive poor returns from the sale of their natural resources, and calls from regional environmental organisations to exploit natural resources in a sustainable manner are unheeded.

Much of the exploitation of our natural resources is done by trans-national corporations (TNC's) whose primary interest is profit. Resource owners derive a miniscule proportion of the returns while large profits are made by the corporations. In Papua New Guinea, the Church has been very vocal against large mining and logging companies which have deprived the people of their land, depleted their forests and silted or polluted their river systems. On many occasions, the church in Papua New Guinea has voiced its concern about the need for sustainable management safeguards in the exploitation of the natural resources.

Land with its cultural and customary importance is one of the cornerstones of Pacific identity. The notion of land permeates all other aspects of the Pacific way of life and grounds Pacific identity solidly in a bond between the people and the land.

Land to us is very special. Land is people's identity. Our connections with the land are somewhat spiritual and natural. It is our most valuable asset; everyone owns the land...we have an interest in anything found on or associated with the land. Land to us means survival, It is our Life. It is our identity.⁶

The Pacific theological understanding of land is one of God's garden in which we, the Pacific people, are stewards.

To us as Pacific Indigenous Peoples, we say that the land is our mother, known as vanua, fenua, enua, banua, fonua, whenua, te aba etc., is life, our soul and our identity: land is people, resources, cultures, beliefs, spirituality, languages, chiefly systems, and sea.⁷

The most important consequence of unbridled exploitation of natural resources is seen in the imminent physical threats to small PICs posed by climate change. The Bush Administration's recent about-turn on its commitments under the Kyoto Agreement with respect to reducing fossil fuel emissions is a major setback in the global effort to deal responsibly with climate change. Putting the profitability of US industries ahead of the environment and livelihoods of people occupying low lying islands, the Federal Government has called for more exploitation of its reserves to fuel what it terms an "energy demand" by the US economy in the near future. Six countries in the Pacific are faced with the threat of seeing whose islands disappear as a result of rising sea levels as a direct consequence of global warming. Already, livelihoods are being affected: the intrusion of salt water into Tarawa's water table is destroying the roots of breadfruit trees causing many of them to die, thereby taking away an essential component of the Kiribati diet.

Economic

Small economies are usually undiversified economies, dependent on the production of a single commodity and on (fluctuating) external demand. They are usually highly exposed economies, vulnerable to external economic shocks. A high level of dependance on external sources for strategic supplies such as food and energy compounds their vulnerability.

Small size usually means below average natural resource endowment and low inter-industry linkages, resulting in a relatively high import content in relation to GDP. This makes the economy highly dependent on foreign exchange earnings. PICs have taken initiatives in the past to reduce their economic dependency through import substitution. This is no longer promoted as a sensible economic strategy. Instead, increased production for the global market is advocated. Severe resource constraints to economic expansion have

led some smaller PICs to entertain offering off-shore banking facilities, a development which has met extreme opposition from the G-7 countries, which have black-listed Niue and the Cook Islands for their offshore banking initiatives.

There has been limited success in diversifying the economic bases and encouraging productive private sector investment in small island countries and returns on public investments have been low. Agriculture and fishing remain the main economic activities for the vast majority of the region's population, and for some countries, they are their only source of exports. Given these realities, Pacific governments may be said to be pursuing economic policies that are completely unsuitable. In Vanuatu, the government was advised by the international financial institutions and the Asian Development Bank to adopt free trade policies whilst 80% of the population live in the rural areas and live off subsistence farming. Unreal aspirations have produced dissatisfaction within national populations. A heavy emphasis on foreign investment as the engine of growth will encourage greater foreign control of island economies and create increased dependency by Pacific peoples on externally devised economic initiatives rather than promoting and supporting local initiatives.

Undue political and economic influence exercised by foreign business interests can have harmful development and security consequences. Unscrupulous foreign business firms and adventurers are often attracted to off-shore financial facilities which some cash-strapped island states have now established. The Vanuatu Government was recently nearly bankrupted as a result of unsound and dubious investments. There are increasing incidences of criminal intent in foreign business ventures in small states. Besides the administrative, economic and political problems these cause, there are serious security implications.

6. What Motivates the Church to Speak Out on Globalisation?

A Theological Assessment of Globalisation.

The Bible contains a number of cases where a theological assessment or critique is made of a particular socio-economic regime:

- a) The Book of Exodus tells us how Yahweh sees the sufferings of a group of Israelite slaves oppressed under the Egyptian regime. He hears their cries for help and intervenes in human history to liberate them from oppression and initiate a new regime through the Covenant he makes with them.

I have seen how cruelly my people are being treated in Egypt; I have heard them cry out to be rescued from their slave-drivers. I know all about their sufferings, and I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians and to bring them out of Egypt to a spacious land, one which is rich and fertile ... (Exodus 3:7-8)

Egypt, under the Pharaohs was characterized by the politics of oppression and exploitation, an economy of greed and affluence, and a religion of triumphalism used to justify domination and protect the interests of the rich and powerful. In contrast to this, Yahweh makes a covenant with his people to establish an alternative or contrast society built on the politics of justice and compassion, the economics of sharing and concern for others, and a religion where the poor and marginalized were of special concern to God. (cf Walter Brueggeman, *The Prophetic Imagination* 1978) The prescriptions surrounding the Jubilee Year (Lev. 25:8-55) were put in place to restore economic justice and lessen inequality among God's people.

- b) The Old Testament Prophets - Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Elijah, Ezekiel and others - often raised their voices to speak out in God's name when the dominant socio-economic system of their day stood in opposition to God's dream expressed in the covenant. They spoke about the oppression, injustice and exploitation of

the poor by the rich (Isaiah, 58:1-8, Ezekiel 34, Jer. 7:22-25); the inadequacy of worship, fasting and prayer if these were not accompanied by justice and concern for the poor (Isaiah 1:11-17, Amos 5:21-24); the unjust practices of businessmen in order to increase their profits (Amos 8:4-7); and the futility of the rich in pursuing unending prosperity (Isaiah 5:8). In many ways the prophets stood out as “the conscience of Israel” through their criticism of economic injustice and growing inequality among the people.

- c) Jesus came into a world where there was great inequality and poverty and where, for many, the Covenant had been reduced to strict observance of laws and ritual. He made a tour of all the towns and villages (Mt. 9:35-36) and saw with his own eyes the consequences of the economic and religious system of his day. His heart was moved with compassion for the poor, the sick and the suffering. He revived the covenant dream under a new name - what he called “the Kingdom of God” (Luke 4:43). The Kingdom envisaged a time of reversals and alternatives to the existing socio-economic regime — the exploitative plans of the arrogant are to be dashed; the poor are to be lifted up and the mighty pulled from their thrones; the hungry are to be fed and the rich sent away empty (Luke 1:51-53). Jesus judges the selfish pursuit of money as being incompatible with the service of God (Mt. 6:24). In the Kingdom special concern is to be given to the poor and the marginalized (Luke 4:16f, 6:20-26); wealth is to be shared not hoarded (Luke 12:13-21, 16:19-31); seeking prestige must give way to the service of others (John 13:1-17); retaliation must give way to forgiveness (Mt. 18:21-35); compassion and concern, not greed and selfishness, embody the alternative consciousness of the Kingdom (Luke 10:33, 15:20); and love is all important (John 13:21-35). In fact, Jesus’ vision of the Kingdom of God imagined a new world order where all are brothers and sisters in the one family of God are characterized by inclusiveness, love, forgiveness, justice, service and compassion.
- d) Scripture scholars today also tell us that the book of Revelation offers a radical critique of the politico-economic system of the

Roman empire. The author of Revelations provides two contrasting symbols – the New Jerusalem and its evil counterpart, Babylon. The New Jerusalem is the symbol of the redeemed community, those who follow the Lamb and live by Christ's values. Babylon is where the Lamb and his values are rejected and atheistic consumerism reigns. When this text was written in the first century, the symbol of Babylon would have applied very clearly to the Roman Empire. For centuries her military and political machinery had manipulated trade in the entire Mediterranean Basin to ensure the wealth and luxury of the city of Rome.

In their book *Unveiling Empire – Reading Revelation Then and Now* (1999:xxii) Wes Howard-Brook and Anthony Gwyther note that it was once thought that Revelations was written as a message of hope for Christians undergoing persecution in Asia Minor. However: "The text of Revelation suggests that it was *seduction by the Roman Empire from within a context of relative comfort*, rather than a terrifying persecution that more accurately describes the situation of the original audience of the book of Revelation." John of Patmos tried to address the pastoral situation of the seven ekklesiai and discern what it meant to be Christian within the specific socio-economic context of the Roman Empire in which they lived.

The attractiveness of the Roman empire was seducing members of the Churches away from true Christian discipleship. Revelation sought to unveil the truth about empire using images such as a *seductive whore* who offered the good life in exchange for obedience and a *ravenous beast* which devoured any who dared to oppose it. It was also guilty of economic exploitation because its arrogant attachment to wealth and affluent life-style led to oppression of the poor.

The Roman empire (Babylon) stood in diametric opposition to the ways of God (or the New Jerusalem). Christians were called to "come out" of Babylon – to resist empire and embrace God's alternative way. Revelation calls Christians to have faith in God rather than empire. The "washing of robes" (22:14) represented the struggle to either break or remain free of the practices of

Babylon so as to be faithful disciples of the Lamb. The use of the present participle – “washing” – stresses the ongoing character of this task for breaking free of empire is, by its very nature, an ongoing task.

When we contrast the values of the “gospel” of Globalisation with the values of the gospel of the kingdom (cf below) we begin to see that they are often in opposition to each other:

<i>The “gospel” of Globalisation</i>		<i>Jesus’ Gospel of the Kingdom</i>
unrestricted profit and individual greed, selfishness	⇒	generosity, communitarian sharing
accumulation and hoarding	⇒	altruism - caring, concern, love
ruthless economic rationalism	⇒	distribution, reciprocity, sharing
competition	⇒	social responsibility of the wealthy, cooperation and interdependence
injustice and exploitation	⇒	just wages and unionized labour
domination	⇒	service of others
inequality	⇒	better distribution of wealth
growth in poverty and crime	⇒	option for the poor and marginalized
corruption of human values	⇒	dignity of all as brothers and sisters
exclusion and marginalization	⇒	inclusiveness of all in family of God
production for surplus	⇒	production for sufficiency
production for sale	⇒	production for distribution
monetary wealth	⇒	non-monetary rewards

(Note that many core Pacific values are in line with Kingdom values)

We begin to realize that the negative aspects of Globalisation are incompatible with the Kingdom and that there is something seriously wrong with an economic system that produces so much human suffering and indignity. We begin to realize that that system has become an oppressive sinful structure in our society. While it is true that only individuals can sin, sinful economic structures can be

built up in society due to the sinful all-consuming desire for profit and power at any price on the part of individuals. In turn, once put in place, sinful structures continue to facilitate further personal sinfulness — greed, selfishness, domination, exploitation, and injustice. (Other examples of sinful structures in society are institutional forms of racism such as apartheid, patriarchal dominance, slavery, unjust taxation systems etc.)

People can be blind to the unjust, dehumanizing and destructive trends that human sinfulness has progressively built into the various social, political and economic structures that make up our society. They can easily be led to ignore, be silent about or even defend the existing situation. Hence it is imperative that we, as Christians, conscientise or make others aware of how sinful our economic system (and other structures) have become and that we call for “conversion” or a change of heart so that these sinful structures can be changed and alternatives pursued. In this sense the Church today like the Old Testament prophets must become “the conscience of society”.

The rich (Christians) of this world must learn to share their abundance with the poor or they will face eternal condemnation (Luke 16:19-31). The poor, the hungry, the thirsty, the marginalized and the lonely must be at the centre of our concern otherwise we will be cast out of God’s presence on the day of judgment (Mt. 25:41-46). Without putting into practice the kingdom values of caring and sharing and concern for others we can expect to hear the harsh words of Jesus:

How terrible for you who are rich: you have had your easy life!

How terrible for you who are full: you will go hungry!

How terrible for you who laugh: you will mourn and weep!” (Luke 6:24f)

In other words these are serious, very serious issues to which we must give very serious attention. Our eternal salvation is at stake.

7. The Island of Hope: The Pacific Response to Economic Globalisation

The main thesis of globalisation is that “there is no other way”. If the world wants to generate economic prosperity, globalisation of the free market is the only way. The claim is that it will alleviate poverty by encouraging entrepreneurial spirit. Any resistance to this is both futile and a dream.

The concept of the Island of Hope is not merely a dream. It is founded in reality. The institutions and values embedded in the Island of Hope may not create wealth on a massive scale but they will never be responsible for creating second class citizens, destroying the environment at will, causing poverty, the debasement of humanity and denial of human dignity, as economic globalisation is doing. The Island of Hope will never entail economic tyranny. Spirituality, family life, traditional economy, cultural values, mutual care and respect are components of the concept of the Island of Hope which prioritises relationships, celebrates quality of life and values human beings and creation over the production of things. The Island of Hope is an alternative to the project of economic globalisation which entails domination through an unjust economic system.

a) Spirituality

Spirituality is one of the artesian springs that flow eternally from the bedrock of clean, cold and fresh waters, quenching the thirsts of Pacific island people. This spirituality is founded on our faith in a living God who creates, loves, liberates, cares and sustains us. Rituality concerns relationships with the divinity who becomes the sole owner of everything that takes place between the individual and the divinity. From a Christian perspective, spirituality is a relationship with God who is Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer, Alpha and Omega, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, our beginning and our end. We believe in a living God and Jesus Christ who is central in our spirituality. No matter how rough and stormy the seas of life may be, Pacific communities

and individuals have faith in a living God, they believe in the power of prayers, and have hope that God will answer all our problems. It is our faith in a living God that nurtures the spiritual dimension of our lives and that influences our daily presence and actions.

Our spirituality enables us to listen to persons and the environment that surrounds us as well as humbly listening to what God is telling and revealing to us. In our spirituality we listen to hear and to know how God is incarnating Himself in our community today. Our spirituality is our total immersion into the depths of our being where we feel the loving and peaceful presence of the Being of beings, our mysterious, righteous and just God.

As we prayerfully immerse ourselves into the flowing river of God's love, the engulfing presence of God enables us to construct meanings of our existence and lives. This spiritual presence enables us to dream dreams and see visions of how to live creatively and meaningfully with our families and communities.

Our Pacific spirituality also involves building a sense of community with the whole world created by God. It empowers us to appreciate and have relationship with the whole of creation thus accepting our responsibility as stewards of God's creation.

Our belief in our relationship with God places the Cross at the centre. The centrality of the Cross influences our relationships with God and God's Holy Spirit. The manifestations of the fruits of the Holy Spirit permeate and sustain a community of caring and sharing, a community of love, fellowship, and of building relationship, a community of learning and witnessing, a community that promotes justice. Our spirituality therefore is the wellspring and cornerstone of our Pacific communities.

The centrality of the Cross in our Spirituality also impels us in our vision of building God's community of creation that envisages an ecological caring and oneness that is expressed in Isaiah 11:6-9).

The wolf shall live with the lamb
The leopard shall lie down with the kid
The calf and the lion and the fatling together
And a little child shall lead them
The cow and the bear shall graze
Their young shall lie down together

And the lion shall eat straw like the ox
 The nursing child shall play over the hole
 Of the asp
 And the weaned child shall put its hand on
 The adder's den
 They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy
 Mountain; for the earth will be full of the
 Knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Pacific spirituality is being formed, developed and nourished in the homes, communities and churches through events such as prayer groups, communal worship, studying the words of God, communal ceremonies, cultural events and interacting with our natural environment. Also through indigenization of our ways of worship, cultural activities, dances and rituals.

Through the proclamation and teachings of the Christian Gospel in developing our faith, our spirituality is further grounded and inspired by the understanding that believers are impelled to be Christian salt and light wherever they live and wherever they work.

This is why in the Pacific, as people of faith and communities of faith, we will go all the way out to give and share our time, money and possessions with the church, even though this may mean for some going without meals for the day. Being grounded, we walk in this spirituality, we give and share generously with the Church. We live as caring and loving communities. Daily family prayers and devotions are practised widely in communities besides worship on Sundays.

Psalms 51:10–17 is one of the Biblical passages that expresses the prayers and the nature of the type of spirituality that Pacific Island people live. “Create in me a clean heart O God, and put a new and right spirit within me”.

As the waves, sands and debris of globalisation daily wash up against Pacific shores and as the low and high tides of its negative and positive contributions are encountered, spaces and opportunities are needed where we can analytically and creatively interact with its influences and effects on our spirituality. Theological reflections on effects of globalisation on our spirituality are needed.

While religious faith and practice is strong, there is a danger that adherence to a “churchy” style of Christianity can prevent people

from seeing the implications of their Christian faith in a rapidly changing world. Seeking to confront the root causes of injustice and the growth of poverty and inequality in an increasingly globalised Pacific are often not priorities for many Christians - especially those who have joined the pentecostal, fundamentalist groups flooding in recently from the Western world, particularly the US. (cf K. Barr *Blessed Are the Rich*, 1998). Serious attention also needs to be given to the recommendations to the Churches by Manfred Ernst in the concluding chapter of his book *Winds of Change* 1994.

b) The Pacific Family

The Pacific family is the basis of the social fabric of the society. The nuclear family is an entity within the wider grouping of kinship and relationships known as the Extended Family. Community relationships are strengthened by the extended family as properties and resources are held in common. Sharing and caring is an obligational value that results in no one being left in need. All share in their commitments to church, village, community life and family life.

The caring element is evident in the set up as people recognize these caring relationships as a natural part of living in the extended family. Traditional and cultural practices also reinforce this sense of caring, for example the Tongan notion of *mohe'ofa* or handing on of culture by the mother, or *ofa'akainga*, the traditional sharing, caring and mutual respect by which the extended family, neighbours and the poor are cared for.

Though modern life styles have encroached on this, especially in the urban areas; Pacific societies continue to maintain the traditional social fabric. It is still the operative mode of relating to one another. The Pacific may not have 'economic millionaires' because of their extended family commitments, but there are plenty of human values that are treasured in these societies, as distinct from the material things of value acquired via the cash economy. This brings in another important point- the relationship between work and family. The Pacific family relates to work as the fundamental sustainer of the family. Work not only contributes to the basic needs and confers dignity on people but also brings an identity and a sense of belonging. It affords time and space for leisure and cultural ties and creates cultural and

spiritual values. This affirms that the Pacific family is the arena of sharing and caring, but it is also the source of human development which values people.

c) Traditional Economy

The traditional economy and the cultural values which underpin the Pacific Island Countries protect them from the full onslaught of the negative effects of globalisation. This is so because:

- The communal ownership of land is still strongly adhered to;
- The subsistence economy continues to complement the cash economy and provides livelihood for many (53% of Fijians, 80% of those in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands and 85% in PNG);
- Communitarian values of caring and sharing still motivate most people;
- *Many who are unemployed in the formal sector create livelihoods for themselves (self-employment) in the non-formal/subsistence sector.*

Thus, in the Pacific, alternatives to an export-oriented, market-driven, globalised cash economy continue to exist and sustain small participatory communities. These alternatives are often devalued in favour of 'efficiency' and 'profitability' as demanded by currently dominant liberal economic ideas and theories. Such theories (promoted by the Bretton Woods Institutions) seek to draw everyone into a market-driven, globalized cash economy centred in large towns and cities.

It is important to note that current development plans based on liberal economic thinking:

- Devalue traditional culture and village life and draw people to the cities;
- Downplay the subsistence economy centred around agriculture and fishing (even though large numbers of people in the Pacific would not survive without it);
- Undermine traditional values of caring and sharing in favour of individualism, private accumulation and competitive consumerism;

- Concentrate on developing formal education to prepare people for formal employment in a cash economy (yet non-formal education for livelihoods in the non-formal sector also needs to be encouraged).

The modern formal cash economy (money based and reliant on production for cash, buying and selling, and earning wages) devalues the traditional economy because it cannot comprehend or measure production for consumption, reciprocity, sharing and communal work without wages.

Western economics equates development with economic growth while traditional economics revolves around people and the holistic quality of their lives.

In view of this, we hold that:

- The people, the land and the sea are our most important resources;
- The use of the land and the sea in both the traditional and the modern economy should be sustainable and be of benefit to all;
- The traditional communal ownership of land must be maintained and legally protected;
- The existence of a dual economy (cash/subsistence) in most Pacific Island Countries needs to be recognised. Subsistence production needs to be re-valued and supported because it ensures self-sufficiency, sustainability, food security, and livelihoods for a large percentage of Pacific Islanders. (Development should include greater market-access for subsistence surpluses).
- Traditional knowledge and skills should be taught at all levels of education (formal and non-formal) for both boys and girls;
- The traditional values of caring and sharing need to be encouraged over selfish individualism and private accumulation of material wealth.

d). Cultural Values

Pacific people attach immense value and importance to culture. In the 'Island of Hope,' people of the Pacific express and display their God-given and God-driven culture. It is the people's belief that God speaks to them and to others in their culture and he does so in many ways.

One of those ways which is one of the great towers of strength of the culture of people of Oceania⁸, is seen in their readiness to share all that is uniquely theirs with others. Sharing and giving one's best out of deep love and concern, is the hallmark of reciprocal giving.

A strong ethic of sharing and caring underlies the Pacific's surviving communal customary land tenure systems and is reflected in both the re-distributive practice of *kerekere* ('borrowing' or requesting help) and the notion of responsibility for the welfare of family and community that is at the heart of *wantokism*. It is also at work in the substantial transfer (one third of GNP in Samoa) of remittances from islanders living abroad, and its reciprocation by islanders who stay. According to Hau'ofa (1993:13) economists misinterpret remittances because they 'do not take account of the social centrality of the ancient practice of reciprocity, the core of all Oceanic cultures'. In so doing they:

...overlook the fact that for everything homelands relatives receive they reciprocate with goods they themselves produce, and they maintain ancestral roots and lands for everyone, homes with warmed hearts for travellers to return to at the end of the day, or to re-strengthen their bonds, their souls and their identities before they move on again. This is not dependence but interdependence, which is purportedly the essence of the global system. (Hau'ofa, ibid).

Relationships are strongly valued in Pacific cultures. Cherishing and maintaining relationships with relatives and friends on a regular basis constitutes a non-monetary form of social investment which earns lifelong dividends. Indeed, the building and maintenance of close relationships with one's family and with members of the wider community creates a form of wealth and a sense of social and psychological well-being that really has no market equivalents. Where social relationships are valued, a poor person is one who has no-one

around him/her, because he/she has neglected to invest time and resources in building relationships.

We also have the Pacific notion of time, which we believe to be uniquely ours. Pacific concept of time is limitless, flexible, natural, meaningful, conscious and patient. This concept has been elaborated in the Pacific's 'Coconut Theology'. It is closely linked to 'kairos' time and it is not forced upon people for they are never a slave to time but, like a coconut waiting for its right time to fall, and more will fall, people are always eagerly waiting in expectation to allow time to come. Time comes and it will continue to come. The jargon, 'Fiji time,' 'Samoan time,' or 'Pacific time' and even 'Coconut time,' in general, are reflections on the above idea and concept of time.

Pacific people have a history of traversing boundaries and seeking alternatives. Their ancestors' canoes, amongst the best sailing craft produced by pre-industrial people, led them afar. Today there are many different types of canoes in this liquid continent but all generally serve as reminders of our outgoing, adventurous, and fearless ancestors who traversed the Pacific ocean. People of the Pacific continue to venture forth from their own Islands to 'test the waters' and discover what lies beyond. The urge to reach the other Island, the one that is floating/looming on the horizon, is part of the people's longing.

Pacific culture has at its very centre the idea of net-working. It is its way of communication. Networking emphasizes interconnectedness, mutual interaction (as seen in regular/daily visitation to friends and family). Interaction is based on respect, honour, acceptance of responsibility, humbleness and understanding.

Pacific Culture is unique in that life, in the Pacific way of thinking, is meant to be celebrated. Hospitality is seen as very important and it is naturally expressed and accompanied by feasting, dancing, acting, story telling, and openness to others. People of Oceania are eager and proud to share with others their feasts, their songs and their dances.

Respect is another very strong value of the people of the Pacific. This respect is first and foremost shown towards older people, and derives from the belief that real wisdom comes with age and experience, and there is no gender differentiation here. Pacific meetings cannot start without the presence and the blessings of the elders.

The centrality of family life is part and parcel of the Pacific

communal life style. From nuclear to extended and further on to communal family life, the spirit of bonding is expressed. Within family life parental roles and duties include the sharing of oral history, the passing on of knowledge, beliefs and values, the provision of care and guidance, and disciplining. Family and kinship solidarity are expressed in communal gathering places or meeting houses. Examples of such meeting places include the Kiribati Maneaba; the Samoan Fale and the Fijian yaqona (kava) ceremony. These are cultural meeting places where peace, reconciliation, healing and counselling are practised on individuals and community(s). These are the places where decisions are sought and made.

This island approach in emphasising a communalistic sense of belonging is demonstrated in regional institutions. The Pacific probably has more regional institutions than any other region in the world. Through regional solidarity the small island states of the Pacific have been able to achieve goals which would otherwise have been impossible. The emphasis on commonalities as opposed to differences and the experience of working together to achieve common goals and secure shared interests have created a distinctive Pacific consciousness which is expressed and reinforced in the multiple regional endeavours that Pacific people engage in, including inter-governmental and non-governmental meetings, sporting and cultural events, literary and expressive arts projects, and educational and research activities.

8. Conclusion

The Pacific Churches strongly believe that the values and characteristics which form the essence of the concept of the Island of Hope differentiates the Pacific region from other regions and provides a firm foundation for resisting the negative effects of economic globalisation. The churches also believe that the concept of the Island of Hope can serve as the basis for an ecumenical alternative to globalisation. The concept of the Island of Hope is the living example of a community trying to live a holistic life in accordance with all of God's gifts, and valuing life and human beings over individual aspirations and materialistic gain.

Notes

- ¹ Richard Dickinson, *Economic Globalisation: Deepening Challenge for Christians*, (WCC, 1998).
- ² Konrad Raiser, 'Oikumene and Globalisation' in *ECHOES*, 12/1997 p.2.
- ³ See 'WCC and ECEJ, JUSTICE: The Heart of The Matter: An Ecumenical Approach to Financing Development,' January 2000.
- ⁴ See also Frances Stewart, 'UNCTAD X, High-level Round Table on Trade and Development: Directions for the Twenty-first Century: Income Distribution and Development' paper at Bangkok, 26 November 1999.
- ⁶ John Kawowo, 'Land and Globalisation.' *Report on workshop of the Pacific People's Struggle for Land and Identity in the Pacific*. WCC Publication, p. 19.
- ⁷ Excerpt from the Statement of the Workshop of the Pacific People's Struggle for Land and Identity, Suva 11-14th September 2000.
- ⁸ The word 'Oceania' is used interchangeably in this document with the word 'Pacific' since it adds more to what is meant by the notion of Pacificness of the people of this 'liquid continent'.

Regional Presentations

AFRICA REGION

I. Trade

Current Global Situation

- Africa and African people are systematically excluded from the global economy.
 - i. structures and rules of trade are not in their favour;
 - ii. The insignificant volume of Africa's Stock Exchange on the world market.
- Illegitimate and odious debt payment. As WARC *Processus Confessionis* puts it, Africa is "excluded more and more from the formal economy while at the same time pressed to pay interest on un-payable, and to a great degree, illegitimate and odious debt."
- Informally the natural and human resources of the continent are being plundered by international and internal exploiters (for example in West, East, Southern and Central Africa).
- African countries have become the dumping place of second-hand goods (e.g., clothing, vehicles, bikes etc.)

How Can Fair Trade Be Developed?

- By sustaining vibrant, local economies that provide food security and the exchange of goods and services, especially those that are managed by women.
- Creating and sustaining regional and sub-regional markets, e.g.,

ECOWAS, SADEC, UDEAC, etc.

- Promoting good governance and democracy that ensure:
 - i) political stability;
 - ii) Selfless leadership that is committed to ‘zero tolerance for corruption’.

The Role of Churches and Ecumenical Bodies

- Churches need to be well informed about the concept of globalization and related issues.
- Churches must build strong theological and ethical bases that will enable their membership to understand the impact of globalization on their daily living.
- Churches must take their communities seriously and help build confidence, and recover their identity and dignity.
- Churches must strengthen their relationship with ecumenical bodies inside and outside Africa.
- Churches must provide alternative analysis of the situation which can challenge the false information that is provided by both external and internal institutions, especially in the area of Poverty Alleviation analysis.

II. Environment

Current Situation

- Climatic changes have led to droughts and floods which have created environmental refugees.
- Due to climate changes farmers are unable to know when to plant, and this has led to food insecurity.
- Environmental degradation due to over-use of the land, bush fires and wrong application of fertilizers.
- Mis-management of natural resources.
- Stealing from the local people their knowledge of the environment

without due acknowledgement (biogenetic and patent).

How can all these be reversed?

- Tree planting, but must make sure to plant trees that enrich, rather than further deplete the soil.
- Proper documentation of local knowledge of the environment (patent and biogenetic).
- Churches must have theology of reconstruction and deconstruction that promote communities of life and wholeness, that affirm human dignity and build confidence.
- In Africa the churches are the people, and since the churches are rooted in the communities of the people, they must continue to be fully involved in the struggles of the people.

III. Ethics

- Churches must be able to unearth the underlying assumption that says economic systems are value-free. It must be stressed that they have values that may either oppose or affirm the values of the Kingdom.
- Churches must not only critique the underlying values of economic systems, but also challenge the language in which they are promoted.
- Churches must re-discover and affirm traditional values that are in line with Kingdom values.
- Underlying ecumenical social ethics must include; peace with justice, integrity, responsibility, unity, participation, freedom etc.

Conclusion

- Churches in Africa are already in the process of initiating alternatives in the following areas:
 - i) Initiatives on the debt relief;
 - ii) Efforts on dealing with environmental issues;
 - iii) Promoting good governance (democratic process);

All these may be summed up in UBUNTU concept – going back into ourselves to find solutions to our own problems. We share the traditional values of inclusiveness, sense of community, reconciliation, participation, dialogue, partnership, fellowship, hospitality, sharing and service experienced by our sisters and brothers from Pacific Islands. The African concept of UBUNTU that calls for looking inside ourselves for solutions to globalization are similar to concepts found in the Rev. Meo's Bible Study in Island of Hope.

ASIA REGION

THE PHENOMENA OF GLOBALIZATION FROM THE ASIA PERSPECTIVE

Clarity

- The history of Asian countries is a continuing history of domination: the “old testament” of Colonialism, the “new testament” of dictatorship, totalitarian, and military rule by our governments, and the “present testament” of colonialism.
- The US is the dominant country, with Japan and EU competing in the free market system.
- US control of Asia is vulnerable to several threats against its interest: “the sleeping giant” China, Arabian currency where Malaysia is dependent/connected, and the presence of its competing partners such as Japan and EU.
- To further secure US interest in the region, all Asian government are controlled and influenced by the policies and interests of the world powers, through IMF, WB and WTO and the legalization of TNCs and MNCs as the players of our economies.
- Liberalization has made Asian economies export oriented as part of the conditions set by IMF/WB. It has showed high growth for a couple of years, but ended with the financial crises, which happened last 1997.

- Asia is abundant in spiritual, cultural and traditional ways of living. We acknowledge our being a minority religion in Asia, thus Christianity had joined and taken part in the struggles and movements for change. These were continuing struggles/resistance against totalitarian and imperialistic oppression for a more democratic and egalitarian society. Violent and Non-violent method had shown its impact and significance from the following Asian people power experience: May 4 in China, Feb. 25, 1986 and January 16, 2001 in the Philippines, 1919 Korean Independence movement, the Vietnam War.
- Asian economies are dependent on its agriculture, aquatic, and mineral resources.

Critique

- US economy is a weak economy. It assumes world power status through war economy. It gains strength and power from unpeace, injustice and destruction of creation.
- Being dependent on war to survive its economy, it has orchestrated and instigated tensions and conflicts (political, religious and ethnic) among and within Asian nations like China vs. India, India vs. Pakistan, North vs. South Korea, China vs. Taiwan, then sell war armaments. After the war, US companies brought their companies as the rehabilitation alternative for development, making an image of “peacemakers” and being out of the responsibility.
- Aware of the threat of China, its currency and the Arabian currency may be in the near future, the US smartly colonised the economies of almost all Asian countries except Malaysia to be its back-up pawns in its aim to defeat China in the future.
- To ensure domination and control, our Asian governments are dictated and controlled mainly by US government. Asian governments are run through corruption, coalition and nepotism.
- Media education has a major impact on the dwindling practice of *oikomene* values that has existed even before colonisation came;

such as *gotongrong* (togetherness) in Indonesia, *bayanihan* (collective living) in the Philippines, *panchasila* in India, *daedong yundae* (great solidarity) in Korea, as against the culture of domination, competition, and individualism taught by globalization.

- The introduction of the Intellectual property rights (TRIP agreement) and patenting Asian bio-diverse resources, has further exploited our environment and impoverished our people.
- We have a potential but neglected and exploited domestic economy that we need to recover, protect and maximize. Our richness has secured the food and basic needs of the developed countries leaving us to share the leftovers among ourselves.
- Globalization promises development but put Asian countries into chronic poverty with continuing rise in unemployment, made our countries export our natural resources, and we became a source of cheap labour.
- Resistance and struggle has already been a tradition for Asian countries under a very long colonial rule. Since globalization is a form of colonialization, resistance and struggle (violent and non-violent) is inevitable.
- The WCC member churches call to a decade to overcome violence fits the present situation of Asia. It reminds us churches to be vigilant and be at the forefront of the campaign pursuing peace based on justice.
- To conclude our critique, GLOBALIZATION to us Asians is a continuing entrapment to POVERTY, INEQUALITY, SLAVERY, UNPEACE and INJUSTICE!

Alternatives

For Our Countries:

- Each Asian country must go to the basics and empower itself. Going into one basket is far from reality as Japan is already far from the rest in terms of industrialization, with Korea and Singapore following.

- Asian solidarity of groups and institutions calling for change, such as NGOs, unions, churches, farmers, and other civil society groups shall be organized to create a firm ground that could be in solidarity with other regions.
- 'David' bringing 'Goliath' to court. Unions in Korea brought IMF to the Korean court and is calling for the support and solidarity of partners.
- ASEAN plus 3 (S. Korea, Japan and China). This could be utilized to strengthen the power of Asian countries to negotiate and compete with EU and US.
- Prioritize food security/protection in order to be self sufficient at the same time have orderly and principled trading relationships with partner countries.
- Sustain programs and policies protecting our bio-diverse resources and fight against the TRIP agreement.

FOR us and our CHURCHES:

- Do awareness and capability building.
- Enhancing the use of our own spirituality and theologies: Confucianism, Hinduism, Taoism, contextualized Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Minjung Theology, and Theology of Struggle reading the Bible through Asian Eyes.
- Strengthening people's movement. We cannot rely on our government; we have to journey with the people's movement.
- Urging WCC and CCA to create and develop network and co-operation between and among the church and the civil society.
- Living the spirit of the BANDUNG Conference held last 1953. This conference which was attended by Asian and African delegates triggered the struggle for independence by the African and Asian countries.
- Inspired by the true message of the Gospel, we need to bring these realities to our people, speak out the truth, and bring hope!

Asian-Pacific Solidarity

Some of our ancestors could be rooted out from the people of Polynesia, as in the case of Taiwan and Indonesia. This is because of the land and oceans that have connected our life, different from a foreign point of view as the boundaries among ourselves. The West-led development has destroyed us, separated us, that is why they said that the seas are the boundaries, because they are for them to swim and fish.

We would like to say two specific things that we think should be put into serious discussions:

1. Environmental Issues/Climate Change

Asian Countries, as agricultural countries, have already experienced the worst of climate change. We will do our part in the call for the implementation of the Kyoto protocol as the minimum, and trying to work for better reforms.

2. Food Security

Asia, which had been following the export oriented industrialization process, has led us to be more trapped and slaves of the superpowers, after the 1997 Asia crises. This can happen to the Pacific, if the same model of development will be implemented.

Having these oceans and lands as connection we find similarity with your concepts of life. It is true that the concept of time for all of us Asians and Pacific is a relaxed way of life because we care for sharing and relating. We do not need to rush, for what is there to rush for? We are not competing? Your concept of family, relationship, life, nature, spirituality, culture, economy, politics is similar to our's. Your stories have reminded us of our ancestors sharing the same stories to us. That is why when you cried, we felt the pain. When you laughed, we felt the happiness. When you spoke, our hearts were enlightened. When you dance, we rejoiced.

Being small does not mean being weak. It is our being simple, humble and our concept of the harmony of life! This is our unique contribution to the international work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Tenemos Esperanza!!!

I. Issues

A. Economy

External Debt

In Argentina, the external debt, by the end of the year 2000, was estimated to be of around 128.000 million dollars and right now it must get to 145.000 millions. The payment of its interests in one year –between 11 and 15.000 millions- takes up between the 22 and 29 % of the National Budget. Even if we comply –regularly and continuously- with the demands and the requirements imposed by the IMF, we have been undergoing three consecutive years of permanent recession and the decrease is evident in all areas. The statistics on poverty in a country with amazing natural richness just point out a tremendous contradiction, which can easily be explained by the condition of a country in structural crisis and totally dominated by the permanent pressure of the international bank.

This is so much so that it is not only the country's economy but the country itself which is defined as having no way out. The ideology behind globalization supports that the only way out is the fulfillment of the demands of capital. They argue: there is no other alternative, we must honour the debt. In this way the ideology of globalization turns out to be an ideology of domination.

1. Free Trade Agreement for the Americas (FTAA)

The emergence of initiatives which work from the grassroots of our continent run parallel to the phenomenon of economic unification of non-regulated capitalism. While citizens in the continent are fighting to develop a more just way to survive against all odds, ironically, international trade law systems like the NAFTA or the most recent Free Trade Agreement for the Americas create wider imbalances. They also contribute to the increase of socio-economic inequalities between countries of the North and those of the South, the rise of exclusion and poverty, the threat to the biosphere and worldwide non-regulation.

2. “Seagull capitals”

The reality of this economic strategy showed us how entrepreneurs put the earnings of their investments outside our countries in the phenomenon called “seagull capitals” or “flying capitals”. None of our countries have any benefit from the “pouring down” of wealth, translated into national investment or popular benefits from this stage of production and results.

3. Drug Traffic

Traditional markets are closed for the common people in Latin America. Thus, drug trafficking emerges as a perverse alternative to globalized economy, especially among young, poor people. A young man can earn about \$500 USD for each transaction, that is equivalent to a two-month average salary in Quito, Ecuador.

B. Social Relations

What was mentioned about economy, affects or creates directly other aspects of ordinary life in our countries. Some were mentioned in our discussion:

- *Democracy*
- *Corruption*
- *Migration*
- *Traditional, communal values at stake*
- *Religious diversity*
- *Youth*

Everything that was discussed creates lack of hope, insecurity, uncertainty and need for escape from problems, maybe using religion, drug abuse, violence and other kinds of marginal behavior to avoid facing the consequences of the model imposed to our daily lives.

II. Response from churches and communities

A woman poet from Paraguay says, "I'm seriously thinking of going through God's pockets".

In the Bible, we have a clear example of what it means to break a seal that shows us some reality that hitherto lay hidden to human eyes. The Book of Revelations is the book of the things that will be revealed as long as humanity continues its path of death and destruction. Revelations 6:5–6 enlightens and guide us to confront the deadly walk of neo-liberal economic globalization:

⁵When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come out!" Then I saw a black horse, and its rider had a balance scale in one hand. ⁶I heard what sounded like a voice from somewhere among the four living creatures. It said, "A quart of wheat will cost you a whole day's wages! Three quarts of barley will cost you a day's wages too. But don't ruin the olive oil or the wine." ¹

The four seals included in the greater text (Rev. 6:18) form a kind of unity by its symbolism. They express the condition of our history, so we can see reality as it is. The text shows us four horses and horsemen on their speedy path to annihilate or eliminate human life in four different manners: imperialism, war, poverty and sickness. Behind a facade of triumph and glory, they hide the unavoidable death of an endless war, hunger and injustice. The act of breaking the seals is the revelation of a crude reality behind the siren's songs that entertained us years ago. In the specific case of the third seal, we have a horsemen riding the skies with a scale, a symbol traditionally used to represent justice and fair trade, but now turned into a tool of condemnation, exclusion and poverty. Barley and wheat were the food

of the common people in biblical times, so the price imposed by the horseman was extremely high and impossible to handle by them. On the other hand, he protects, expensive and luxury products as olive oil and wine, mostly owned by high-class, powerful tradesmen.

God is not absent amidst the globalization of problems. His word has accompanied, for centuries, situations even worse than those we are living in today. In this sense, Apocalypses, written during the domain of the Roman Empire, purposely full of cipher language is meant to be revealed to the Christians and hidden from the dominators and stressed the hope of the first Christians. It dared to say at times of persecution, not only that the oppressing system was the antichrist or the beast, but also that the satanic empire would come to an end. He who would remain firm to the end would not be a loser, but would obtain the crown of life. Upon this faith have rested those who have preceded us on this road.

Probably the churches won't be the ones qualified to give answers and find "technical" ways for this situation of internal and external oppression. Neither economy nor state politics are their main strengths. But there are two precepts arising from God's word which turn out to be imperative for those of us who affirm that Christ is the Lord of history:

1. To defend, affirm and announce that solidarity and love among human beings are central values in life, and that these values, although are un-priced at the market, have the strength of God.
2. To announce that this suffering is not God's will, that it is under his judgement and that it will come to an end. To encourage our people to have hope.

Our agenda for the future states as follows:

- Revaluing our indigenous cultures and institutions.
- Work on the opposition to FTAA as a project for Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Rebuilding our social tissue in our communities, with special emphasis on women, children and youth.
- To articulate encounters with churches and communities about

economic globalization and its impact on the region.

- To work on specific alternatives to overcome poverty as a result of economic globalization.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Our presentation contains two parts. We would like to comment on the Island of Hope presentation and document, and secondly share our common view on globalization.

The Island of Hope Concept

We would like to say how much we cherished the theological reflection on globalization in your document. We found it applicable to other regions and churches of the world. The strong sense of community and admiration of traditional values that are in harmony with the values with the Kingdom of God, we should all share in common.

We also recognized that it means for all of us a new theological concept of the church, proclaiming and renewing its original task. We also recognized how beneficial cross-cultural exchange is in mission, interpreting the gospel. We share many concerns with you especially in rural areas. We share in common the fact that in our situation also, traditional values and economies are being destroyed. We share many values, for example family as the basic foundation of society and church and not individual as is seen in many western societies and churches.

We would like to express our solidarity with you, as stressed in the Budapest paper in your folder. I would like to quote one passage:

We assure the churches in the global south of our solidarity. Our part of Europe bears a considerable measure of responsibility for many developments, with both good and bad consequences, in Southern Countries. Today our peoples share many similar problems and challenges, and we need each other to find solutions. In the spirit

of ecumenical partnership, we call the WCC and other ecumenical organizations to support cooperation and networking between churches in Central and Eastern Europe and churches in the global South, in particular, through consulting on globalization.

We would also like to challenge some parts of the document as coming from totalitarian dictatorships.

- We think that monitoring of private sector by civil society might be beneficial in some cases, e.g., big corporations, but has its limits, e.g., in low-scale private ownership and private economic activity — if it carries responsibility for the community. We don't deny the positive sides of total socialism but it may limit economical state initiative.
- Local subsistence has evident natural limits. If it is exaggerated it deprives qualification of production and it allows domination of internal and external economic forces and states, as we know it from our experiences of totalitarian regimes.
- Education can not be carried out in a local subsistent unit itself. It does need proper international exchange.

Globalization

We don't want to follow this clarity, critique and alternative method, since you find it in the document in the Budapest consultation, which we would like to draw your attention to. This paper expresses our feeling on globalization.

Our approach is special, and is formed by the common experience having lived in communist countries. We found parallels between Marxism and neo liberal ideology because they share similarities.

- Both are centred on the power of economy and both teach the life of the society is and should be controlled by economic relations.
- Both have global aspirations and both are responsible for similar negative consequences;
 - erosion of rural life
 - concentration of power

- depriving of personal dignity,
- both claim universality and have a tendency to destroy natural limits and balances;
- both try to marginalize religions.

Now I would like to share some new concerns of ours' since the Budapest consultation; namely:

1. The growing need for more democracy and transparency in global governance;
2. The violent protests against globalization;
3. The role of the media.

1. Democracy and transparency in global governance

To begin with the Budapest consultation, there was much talk about the changing nature of power in global processes. We feel that democracy in global governance is in danger. I quote from the Budapest document:

Globalization dramatically transforms the nature of power. Democratically elected governments and their delegates in international organisations lose power to increasingly influential international bureaucracies, transnational corporations, media-owners and actors in the field of financial 'global' capita. We challenge these power structures, urging them to become more transparent, accountable and representative. The peoples of the world need to seize control of global political and economic processes. Democracy should be reinstated in the new forms of decision-making, at local, national and international levels.

2. Anti-globalization protests

We have to state that we share most of the concerns of not only young people protesting during some international events. We especially bear in mind that they show their solidarity with the victims of globalisation, mostly in the global south who suffer and even die as a result of economic injustice. At the same time that there are

evidences that destructive and violent forms of protest are often proposed and manipulated by powerful forces of globalization. Violent actions compromise genuine concerns of people and drive discussions in the wrong direction, limiting the public debate on globalization to superficial and sensational media stories.

3. Role of the media

We acknowledge that the media has a unique level of influence on public opinion and therefore it should recognize/understand its responsibility for its work. Media should hear and reflect as many people as possible and not just the rich and the powerful.

PACIFIC REGION

1. The 'Island of Hope' concept has brought the Pacific people to think about their future destiny in terms of their cultural, educational, economic and social development.
2. When addressing globalization there is a need to be more specific to different audiences in terms of actioning alternatives. For example, youth groups, churches etc.
3. In the Pacific the NGOs and churches need to be more organized so that the issue of globalization can be addressed through these bodies. These bodies act as a base for raising the concerns.
4. When the donor bodies, e.g., IMF or World Bank give assistance to the Pacific countries, they often have their own 'prescriptions' and are ignorant of the sensitivity of their decisions, e.g., privatization, downsizing of public services, and de-valuation of currency. There is a need to have alternatives for these 'prescriptions'.
5. **Culture:**
 - In the discussion a concern was raised to have a balanced culture. In the Pacific context, for example, the ethics and moral standards need to be preserved.
 - The Pacific way of life is very much interdependent. A

cooperative and partnership approach in globalization would be appropriate instead of an individual approach. The Pacific way of life is very much centred on sharing: sharing and attending to one another's needs is a central element in the lives of the Pacific people.

- Realization that culture is alive in the Pacific. We must not be ignorant of the dynamics of globalization.
- 30 years back, using the word 'subsistence farming' in the classroom is thought of as a very inferior farming. Now the concept is the basis of an accepted way of development, for example, sustainable development.

6. Education:

- The issue of education in the Pacific is a concern. At the moment the education system does not address the needs of the Pacific countries in general. The education system seems to give false hope to the young generation. When they leave school they realize that there is very little chance of their getting a job.
- Education system is for white-collar jobs. That is no longer a great need in the Pacific in terms of employment.
- What we need is an education system that stimulates graduates to internalize their resources. Land and the sea. Statistics have shown that there are a lot more Bachelor of Arts in economics, administration or white-collar oriented jobs than in technical skill areas.
- In Tonga an agricultural school was closed down because there was no intake of students.
- Realizing the need, the Pacific churches should sit down and talk about these issues.

7. Financial:

Finance is a major problem in the Pacific. So the resources are not fully utilized by the indigenous people. In most cases multi-national companies open up their business and dictate the policies of the Pacific nations to suit their own needs. Thus the Pacific nations are always on the losing side. We cannot do much because we have to play the game by their rules.

WEST EUROPE AND CANADA

We have listened to our local stories and made a short summary for each, then added some comments with the values in the Island of Hope. These figure in italics, after the summary.

1. In Canada: Percy Schmeitzer is a farmer. He lost his life-savings in a legal case brought against him and was successfully prosecuted by the Monsanto Corporation. The case against him was having accidentally acquired genetically modified Canola seeds, replanting it and harvesting it. The story illustrates the abuse of intellectual property rights and multinational corporate control of agricultural production.

Monsanto separates the human being from his ecosystem. This is contrary to fenua. In this story, justice is not equal to legality; or injustice become legal. BUT ALSO hundreds of people are sending Percy Schmeizer some money so he can appeal in a higher court. This illustrates solidarity on the global planet.

2. In Europe in general: Globalization of the garment trade has reduced the power of women working in the textile industry. It has put the interests of first world women and third world women in conflict, and caused extensive environmental damage by needlessly increasing the transportation of clothing. The “Clean Clothes Campaign” is a movement of solidarity among first and third world women to fight this injustice and illustrates an alternative kind of globalization.

The garment industry illustrates lack of justice, lack of sharing and lack of eco-respect. People in Europe a few years ago were looking after their health by asking for *ecological* (environment-clean) clothes. Now more and more are asking for clothes made in just *social* conditions (fair wages and decent working conditions). The “clean clothes campaign” illustrates global solidarity and common care. [We also mention how come visitors to Germany get really angry because the Germans use their feet and bicycles, not their cars to go places.)

3. In Switzerland: we see examples of how local authorities choose to invest in TNCs instead of investing on the social services of their own citizens, especially women and children. Globalization in some ways leads to a belief that money comes before more human-oriented values.

This illustrates the lack of knowledge that local authorities may have for the real danger of globalization when it is only for economic reasons. It also illustrates *once more than the real losers* from economic globalization are the people (women and children) who contribute to non-market economies.

4. In Canada: Before the elections, a provincial government promises a *public* insurance for automobiles. After the elections, they don't keep their promise, because the fear a legal complaint from the *private* insurance companies. This story illustrates self-censorship before enacting legislation. This illustrates the fear of the power of an *unelected* super national authority might do.

This illustrates how democratic bodies (free elections by every person in a country), can be deprived of their real power by private companies who have the *might of money on their side*.

5. In Norway: a company wants to produce aluminium and mines for bauxite. It finds the Bauxite in an Indian village, where part of the land is sacred and the other part used for local food crops. The Norwegian campaign of NGOs was successful in delaying the Indian government from moving all that Indian population. It is a story that illustrates the power of international society.

In this story, *fenua* (eco-respect and people-caring), is absent from the thinking (conscience) of the Norwegian people who decide that the TNC must go mining in India. There was nearly no mercy. It also illustrates how NGOs and citizens and churches can build solidarity and stop a monster from creating disaster.

6. With us right here; within the WCC South Pacific meeting in August 2001, the USA were not represented. Also, gender issues were only mentioned on the sidelines but not directly addressed in plenary sessions. These two facts are felt by our group to

illustrate part of the problem of economic globalization and the way in which it influences the Church.

Here we see lack of participation (or lack of being invited to participate?). “We are not all sitting on the same mat.” There is also lack of taking time: we see people depriving themselves of proper eating and good sleep – it looks like sacrifice. The USA’s absence also is a pity. It is impossible now for the US churches to see how interdependent we all are, and they cannot take home our ideas to their homes, but we need everybody. (There are many things more to understand, we know).

- 1 *The Contemporary English [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System,* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995 by the American Bible Society.

Bible Study I

Island of Hope as an Oasis Community

Rev. Dr. I. Jovili Meo, Principal,
Pacific Theological College, Suva, Fiji

Reading: Acts 2: 41-47

Palestine was in a constant state of crisis and it was impossible to achieve any permanency between various structures of the government. Politically, “the powers of the aristocracy who were concerned for an equilibrium, were weakened by friction with the Herodian client rulers and the Roman procurators.” The crisis for theocracy was a breeding ground for radical theocratic movements. Hellenistic influences found in cities, culture and language and the present rebellion against the Roman power were obviously evident in the society and people. Tensions between the early structures of government furthered the longing for the Kingdom of God.

There were beggars, rich and poor, robbers and merchants, political zealots and resistance fighters. Some people, like the family of Herod, found their way to the upper class of society while the majority remained poor and marginalized. The trends upwards and downwards shattered traditional values and norms and called forth a longing for renewal. There were also pockets of responsible people who created models of society like the Qumran community. The members of the group sought after people who could live as equals with no one person owning more possession than another. They had a rule that everyone who entered the group must hand over his property

to the community. The three marked dynamic forces that influenced societies and communities: political, economic and cultural were present, creating and recreating, moulding and remoulding people and environment.

In summary, in the early church period, there were groups of disciplined productive communities, groups of communities of social programmes with revolutionary changes, and groups of wandering charismatics living on alms. The Jesus movement was one of the renewal movements. "See we have left everything and followed you" [Mark 10:28], is a characteristic of the Jesus movement. They were uprooted people in search for an 'island of hope'. The seventy apostles sent out depended on the goodwill of the people, the wandering apostles like Paul and Barnabas who like their Lord "has no place to lay his head." The creation of the small community of Christians as recorded by Luke (Acts 2:41-47), like the Qumran community was an "island of hope", surrounded by the brunt forces of the ocean and tidal waves or an "oasis" surrounded by the heat and the engulfing desert. The Island of Hope, although battered and violently shook by the outside blatant and tyrannical forces, stood its ground and grew. A thorough study of that first Christian community hopefully will harvest characteristics pertaining to the Kingdom of God that are parallel to some Pacific values that we want to restore as values of the Island of Hope that can serve as alternative to globalisation.

I must also underline and hopefully we will have time to discuss certain negative Pacific values that encourage globalisation. We must deal with both positive and negative values in the open and only in this way we can be sure of our way forward.

I must begin with positive values that can help generate our discussion.

Certain concepts of the Pacific Island communities are very much the essence of the community of faith. They need some elaboration for the benefit of those who aspire to perpetuate individualism, for those communities that have lost these tenets, and also to help enrich our Christian life of partnership, sharing and service.

The vision of Pacific Islanders involvement in mission work during the 19th century is rooted naturally in their newfound faith and the offering of selves as partners with other islanders who knew,

experienced and lived their own traditional communities' ethos. "*Mai fale ki fale*." [a family in Tonga has a related family in Fiji and the relationship was used by the early missionaries to bring the Gospel from one island to another, or from one country to another] is relational and the foundation of movements of both Fijians, Samoans and Tongans from island to island and from family to family. Significant and inseparable components of this traditional heritage are *inclusiveness, reconciliation, unity, participation, dialogue, partnership, fellowship, sharing and service*. These concepts are gluing factors of communal living: the tenets were the hallmarks of the traditional Pacific communities and used the missionary enterprise, especially our Pacific Islanders' forefathers and mothers who themselves became part of the land [*fenua, fanua, vanua, hanua*]¹ or the soul of the host countries.

As we begin this new millennium a substantial numbers of Pacific islanders continue to live in traditional communities.² These communities are encroached upon and bombarded with economic globalisation, the new Western political and economic systems, the modern development, the mushrooming of small "paradises"³ [hotels, golf courses and sandy beaches] and the thriving cities where traditional values are challenged, discarded and forgotten.⁴ Over the last two hundred years or so, the colonial governments and the churches made marked inroads into the very being of the Pacific people and in many ways shattered the cohesiveness of community life, thus replacing it with capitalistic individualism.⁵ The Pacific people have been dominated for so long that they have become, to use Freire's term, "domesticated,"⁶ and, at the same time, they have lost their own identities. The new wave of Pacific leaders⁷, both in the secular world and in the churches, has awakened to the need for a Pacific island identity rediscovering their own cultural heritage and attempting to protect their traditional communities and ethos. The Pacific people need to re-establish, nourish and grow a Pacific community, one that is truly Pacific and indigenous yet maintaining its integrity in the world community. This move has called for the churches in the Pacific to re-read the Bible and to engage in a theological process of contextualisation, that is, using aspects of their cultural heritage that can explain to them more about their life, their being and their relationship to the Divine and to the community. In the past years communism collapsed in Russia and

Eastern Europe and at the same time capitalism continues to assert itself in the free world. The collapse of communism does not mean the triumph of capitalism or individualistic capitalism. These two political and economic systems cannot solve all the world problems. Perhaps the world can look to the Pacific, more so to the Pacific Islanders' traditional communities as an alternative way forward in this century. Can there be a Pacific community economic system or the Island of Hope economic as opposed to economic globalisation? The Pacific can still offer the world some of those concepts: inclusiveness, reconciliation, unity, participation, dialogue, partnership, fellowship, sharing and service.

I would first try to define this word 'partnership'. The dictionary meaning espouses almost all the words that I have mentioned above, namely, participation, unity, sharing and service and of course we have to include reconciliation and inclusiveness. Partnership calls us to be partners; therefore we are no longer strangers to each other because we have created a kind of relationship where there is no oppression. It is a way towards equality, justice and liberation. Partnership can be described both as *koinonia*⁸ and *diakonia*. Partnership as sharing has dominated the last few years of mission. The Melbourne, Australia World Conference on Mission and Evangelism [May 1980]⁹ dwelled on a polarised debate on Jesus' death on the periphery of the city, hence the "periphery model" (the poor and the marginalised are the focal concern of Jesus), or the "centred-periphery model" (focused on Jesus concerned also for the rich). The Harare document stated, "In Harare we saw once again the immensity of the mission in which God invites us to share. In this mission we who are reconciled to God through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross are challenged to work for reconciliation and peace with justice among those torn apart by violence and war"¹⁰ During the last eight years after Canberra, the Unit II on Church in Mission—Health, Education and Witness continued to express that "The International Missionary Council tradition needs to be maintained and that mission should be kept at the centre of the ecumenical movement, and must be held together with the concern for unity."¹¹ The Unit on Sharing and Service mandated to network with churches and organizations in promoting human dignity and sustainable community with the

marginalised and the excluded. It has tried to explore the issue of power and globalisation, a theological understanding of diakonia, the meaning of “just sharing” in different contexts. It seems that all these committees are advocating partnerships to enable sharing or just sharing in our world. This partnership of sharing and service is rooted in our theological understanding and interpretation.

The concept of the triune God is rooted deeply on partnership and sharing and therefore the trinity is a community of sharing, a partnership. The incarnation in the person of Jesus the Christ is therefore a concrete and existential expression of God’s sharing and partnership with God and with the world. The Eucharist-Lord’s Supper the sign of the living body of Christ shared for the world so that those who partake in it are partners in sharing and healing and in the mission of Christ in the world. Partnership, therefore, is a relationship of continuing commitment and common struggle in interaction with God and the wider community context.

The following stories try to relate some traditional concepts of inclusiveness, reconciliation, unity, participation, dialogue, partnership, fellowship sharing and service of some Pacific communities. As we journey together during this twenty-first century, the churches, societies and governments should espouse these ideals and perhaps are food for thought.

The Kiribati Islands *Maneaba*¹²

As I sat cross-legged inside the *maneaba*, I was experiencing activities at the nerve-centre of partnership, fellowship, participation, sharing and dialogue. It is where the village gathered as a unit, an inclusive point of gathering, a place for reconciliation for the community. Traditionally in a Kiribati village, the *maneaba* is the central open house, built in the middle of the village surrounded by living homes. It serves as a meeting place for all the villagers, including the village elders who make decisions for the village. The *maneaba* is the centre for meal-sharing, care-giving and entertainment for villagers and visitors alike. Each family brings in their meal, which they serve and share with other members of the village. The family would do the same for other families and for visitors. After the meal, the visitors would be entertained with traditional dances and then garlanded with

beautiful flowers and given gifts as token of the community's appreciation for the visit. Nowadays the *maneaba* has also become the centre of village worship, where the whole community sings, prays and reads the Word of God together. As a community and educational centre, it is a place for both intellectual and spiritual empowerment for the people of God and their mission. The *maneaba* serves as the centre of communion for the community. The shared meal becomes a point or a "table" where members of the families serve and share whatever they bring for the community gathering. It is the table where everyone is both guest and host; it is a point of partnership, of reciprocal service and sharing. During this meal different families and groups would stand from where they are sitting and share their traditional dramas, songs and dances which relate Biblical stories or traditional stories with Christian teachings or Christian applications. This is the point where the "worldly" and the "other worldly" tasks are united, for there is no separation of the secular from the spiritual. Here people are reminded that the poor and the neglected are accepted and fed because they are equally important members of the community. Even those members who are absent because of sickness or other reasons are prayed for and visited with food from the *maneaba*.

The Samoan *Fale* [House]¹³

The Samoan *fale* or *fale tele* [great house] is a symbol of village life and the Samoan community. Its construction is geared towards community unity, community relationship, community participation and partnership. The round or oval shape of the *fale* represents the unbroken chain [no start no ending] for those who will congregate in it. It symbolizes unity. Its openness, a house with no wall, symbolizes the idea of inclusiveness- the extension of what goes on inside the *fale* and those outside in the community. What goes on in the *fale* reflects the life of the whole community or its concerns for the well being of the whole community.

The Samoan *fale tele* is used for gathering of the whole village or for district officials. It serves three functions:

- The *fale* is the *Fono*, the meeting place [village and districts] for different groups in the village for the welfare of the people.

- The *fale* is the *Tapuaiga* the worshipping place and the place for supportive actions for any undertaking for the village community.
- The *fale* is the *Malega*, the place for entertaining villagers and guests. It is the place for the common meal, which is brought in and shared among the community. In all three functions —centrality, unity, fellowship and relationship are centre themes. Only in the Samoan *fale tele* could different family members come and meet and discuss their differences, worship together, or entertain and be happy together without feeling isolated or outcast. Perhaps one of the greatest functions of the *fale tele* is that it brings together- or acts as the place of refuge for indifferent parties. It is a place for reconciliation.

The Tongan Spreading of the Mat for Dialogue and Sharing¹⁴

[*Fofola e Fala Kae Fai e Talanga*]

It is the duty of the ancestral head to prepare and spread the mat for community gatherings for important occasions. It is a spread mat for fellowship, partnership sharing and service. For this special ceremony a new mat is spread on top of the usual mat, which is used every day. As soon as the head arrives, the *talanga* or discussion begins. No one is allowed to say anything until the mat is spread. During an occasion of reconciliation, it is important that the two parties keep their stories until the mat is spread. They may come with different ideas and conflicting views, but the mat on which they sit remains the common bonding factor; every one sits on the same mat, which symbolizes the unity of the community. During the time of sharing and dialogue, everyone is free to speak about anything that has caused a problem.

At the arrival of Christianity, the *lotu* mat [gathering of Christians] was spread for the communion of the people, and it became the centre of Holy Communion, the serving and sharing of food [body and the blood of Christ] for the community. The spread mat is a symbol of oneness [people are sitting on the one common mat], a clear indication that it is the mat of reconciliation and sharing. The spread mat

symbolizes the absence of boundaries and everyone is welcomed to participate, either in dialogue or in the sharing of the meal prepared by and for the community.

The Fijian Kava Ceremony¹⁵

The Fijian *kava* or *yagona* ceremony is a ceremonial occasion in which the whole village gathers to discuss matters of village importance or to welcome an honoured guest. The presentation of the *kava* includes *ai wase ni yagona vakaturaga*, or the portion of the food for the chief after the drinking of the *kava*; and this food is eaten by the guests and /or given to the people. This food is equally shared among the people of the community, and no one is left out. Even those people who absent themselves because of other engagements are given shares. There are special deacons to do this task.

This concept carries over to church gatherings where food is shared among the people. During the *kava* ceremony the chief will inform the people of any motions for discussions and the spokesman will then elaborate for further discussion. Affairs of the village, whether secular or spiritual, are discussed and resolutions are made by consensus.

Traditional Communities in Biblical and Theological Understanding

Let me discuss with you the meaning of these community concepts in the light of our biblical and theological understanding. When Jesus taught his disciples that he came **not to be served but to serve** [Mark 10:15] he was using the Greek word *dakoneo*, meaning to **serve or to wait on tables**, refers to slave s who poured out wine for the guests. It includes giving food and drink, extending shelter, providing clothes, and visiting the sick and prisoners. The *maneaba*, the Tongan spread mat, the Fijian *kava* ceremony and the Samoan *fale* are points of partnership, sharing, service, reconciliation, dialogue and participation and fellowship. These are the very essence of the first Christian community. The Roman pagans marvelled at the Christian community way of life when they said, "Look at how these Christians love each other".¹⁶

In the Fijian *kava* or *yagona* ceremony the servant sits at one point

in the circle while the chief sits at the other opposite point of the circle. Jesus saw in the word *diakonia* the essence and dynamic that makes a servant and disciple. For example: "Who is greater, he who sits at table or he who serves? I am among you as one who serves" [Luke 22:27]; and, "For the Son of Man also came not to be served but to serve" [Mark 10:15]. Luke was very selective in his choice of words used to describe the ministry of Timothy and Erastus, when he used the word *diakonoi* [Acts 19:22]. The *diakonoi* or servant is clearly identified as the person serving and mixing the *Kava*. The *Kava* format with its ceremonial words have been experimented and used during the celebration of the Holy Communion.¹⁷ The format is the reverse of the usual church celebration, in the sense that the minister or clergy sits at the servant point of the circle, not from the topside of the table in a rectangular church building. It remains an excellent format for Bible Study, conversational sermons, church meetings, and architectural designs for future church buildings. In one occasion the same minister becomes both the preacher and the officiator of the Holy Communion. He or she is in partnership with the community or fellowship gathering. When delivering the Word, he sits in the position of authority [the chiefly seat], and when he officiates at the celebration of Holy Communion he sits where the servant sits. The circle indicates that everyone included is important and should share in the dialogue and in the sharing of food, the feast [the Pacific Feast] or the elements of the Lord's Supper.

The village community is already there, and with the added concepts of the faith community, will facilitate its strengths as the basis of security and survival. It should be engaged in conscientisation¹⁸ or awareness-raising. This is an important effort for empowering and motivating people to assert their own identity and develop their land as a source of livelihood. We need a kind of education that enhances justice, peace and integrity of creation. An education that helps the people to learn, the art of participatory decision-making. The pastors and village leaders are urged to sit where the people sit and be amongst the people as community developers, and not to be like the colonial masters or missionaries who sometimes are classed as community exploiters. The people are encouraged through education to be more inter-dependent and to divert their

energies away from being imitators of mission boards and oppressive pyramid structure in society at large. They are urged to develop more and more people's oriented structures for the sake of *diakonia* in every given locality and environment.

In the village community, people need leadership, conversion, and incarnational preaching. They need to work on resolutions and action here and now. The key to working towards the preservation of the village community, the church community or the ecumenical community is to be conscious that: "*koinonia* [community] without the spirit of *diakonia* [service] is dead; and *diakonia* without the spirit of *koinonia* is also dead."¹⁹ These two concepts are part of each other and should be treated as such.

The concept of inclusiveness in the *maneaba*, the Tongan spread mat, the Samoan *fale* and the Fijian *Kava* ceremony call for an end to sexism in the community and the church, at least the kind of church brought to us by the missionaries. The church is so institutionally patriarchal that it is hard to believe a few personal transformations will make much of a difference to the systematic oppression of women and other minority groups. Christian symbolism is so deeply entrenched in our sub-conscious experience and we are so strongly culturised as "Christian" that we can never completely walk away from its influence. We also believe, that the Gospel is essentially liberating for all times, and we feel best sharing this belief with others.

Sexism and women's liberation are two related problems that are difficult to solve: they seem like a brick wall as far as the Pacific is concerned. Our patriarchal society and the church's identification with the structure make it a hard wall to break down. But we believe in partnership, in an inclusive, serving and sharing community and a liberating God who will raise prophets to sound the trumpet and, in due time, the wall of sexism will come tumbling down. The new community brought by Jesus is a *koinonia* where people are set free for others. The Pacific people have experienced this partnership in their traditional communities and just have to relearn it in a Christian community. In other words, we learn to be partners by being partners and we can provide context in the community where people can be educated to partnership. They also experience partnership by being in partnership.

At the Pacific Theological College student pastors, priests, or ministers are encouraged to bring their spouses who also undergo some training to be partners with their husbands. They will then experience partnership in their study and will return as partners to their respective communities of service. In the Pacific context these women, the pastors' spouses are thrust into leadership positions whether they like it or not. Their being married to the pastors qualify them as leaders of the churches. The ministry of partnership is therefore most urgent and necessary.

Questions for Bible Study I

Read Acts 2:41-47. From the reading I have found the following characteristics of this community:

1. A learning community;
 2. A fellowshiping community;
 3. A praying community;
 4. A reverent community;
 5. A community where things happened;
 6. A sharing community;
 7. A worshipping community;
 8. A happy community;
 9. A community whose people others like.
- Apart from the examples given above, can you discuss other values that are distinctively Pacific and build up the Island of Hope that will help counter globalisation.
 - Discuss 'fellowshipping community' in relation to partnership, individualism verses community, privatisation through SAP that favours strong individuals in society and encourage acquisitiveness and possessive instinct.
 - Brainstorm on positive values that assist with building the Island of Hope and match them against negative values that encourage economic globalisation.

Notes

- 1 Land or *vanua*, *fenua*, *fanua* cannot be separated from the ethos of the people, for the land is the very soul, and being of the people, the culture and the soil or ground. Paul Tillich's phrase that God is "the Ground of our being" is very meaningful and relevant to Pacific Islanders.
- 2 Sione Tupouniua, ed., *The Pacific Way. South Pacific Social Science*. (Suva: University of the South Pacific), 1975.
- 3 Cynthia Z Biddlecomb, *Pacific Tourism*. (Suva: Lotu Pacific Production), 1981. Ron Crocombe, (ed.) *Pacific Tourism as Islanders see it*. (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, USP), 1980.
- 4 Biddlecomb & Crocombe
- 5 Biddlecomb & Crocombe
- 6 Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (New York: The Continuum Publishing Corporation), 1985
- 7 The move towards independence and a search for identity are evident in books, articles authorised by Pacific Islanders. These include speeches by politicians, seminars by churches on inculturation and contextualisation.
- 8 See Letty M. Russell's books *Growth in Partnership*, (Westminster Press), 1981 and *The Future of Partnership*, (Westminster Press), 1979 for a detail discussion on partnership.
- 9 'Your Kingdom Come', *Mission Perspective*, WCC 1980
- 10 8th WCC Assembly Document, Harare, Zimbabwe, Dec 4-13, 1998.
- 11 Ibid p9
- 12 Dr. David Esterline, Chairperson of the South Pacific Association of Theological Colleges Accreditation Committee and Dean of the Pacific Theological College and the author spent a week at Tangitebu Theological College which has as its central point a *maneaba* where all meetings and entertainment was held. We had on several occasions interviewed both Principal and students concerning the significance of *maneaba*.
- 13 Information on Samoan *fale* came from my discussion with Featunai Liwana, a Samoan member of the Pacific Theological College faculty and a paper he drafted on the Samoan *fale* especially for this paper.
- 14 The Tongan Spread mat concept was used by Father Tu'iniua Finau, a student at the Pacific Theological College as a way of understanding the meaning of the Eucharist in the Tongan context. The author later discussed the whole concept with Finau who also produced a draft article for this paper.
- 15 As a Fijian the concept of the *kava* ceremony remains clear and a natural way of life. More details on the topic and other Fijian concepts can be found in the book by Dr. Asesela Ravuvu, *The Fijian Ethos*, (Suva: IPS, USP), 1987.
- 16 The conduct of the early Christians who lived as a community of sharing and service prompted the heathens to say those words.
- 17 The author used the *kava* ceremony format as part of the community worship and the celebration of the Eucharist.

- 18 “Conscientacio” was first coined by Paulo Freire in his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire discussed three stages of conscientisation or awareness-raising.
- 19 These are words of Bishop Leslie Boseto of the United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands from his story shared with the author of *Sharing and Service [Diakonia]*.

Bible Study II

Island of Hope: A Community of Sharing

Readings: Acts 2:41-47;
Luke 16:19-31; Luke 18:18-23

Culture and Globalization

Globalization can be summarized as economic domination and is clearly incompatible with a biblical view of justice for the poor, and empowerment of the weak. Globalization is about economic power that dominates the weak, and the weakening of the state to carry out its obligations to the weak. Globalization is an inevitable process over which people have little control.

The tidal waves of globalisation have caused the growing landlessness and erosion of access to land. It is a major effect of economic injustice. Landlessness concerns, among many issues, the migration of people within the Pacific itself: from Banaba to Fiji, and from Nauru because of the phosphate mining, from Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to Fiji because of the needs of colonial powers of the time. Internal migration from Bikini Atoll, the venue for testing bombs in the 1950's after WWII, to other atolls like Ebye, Marshall Islands, the shanty town of the Pacific. Others migrated within the Pacific Islands

and the Pacific rim. The growing land-lessness and erosion of access to land reflects economic injustice caused by the super powers because of their own need to develop their own countries' technologies and resources. They seek the raw materials from Third World countries. There are also people in the Pacific itself masterminding this; there are collaborators within our own system who are culpable.

Indigenous people are profoundly affected by **migration and uprooting of people**. The philosophy, concept and ethos of people and the land and the sea, the Pacific *fenua vanua*, *fanua* and *benua* are of paramount importance in the Pacific Islander mentality. We cannot separate the people from the land; they are integral part of the *vanua*. A number of indigenous people are uprooted and have lost their soul or vanua and their culture. Their culture is part of that *vanua*, but they have been uprooted and transferred to another place.

The sources of their traditional livelihood are taken over by corporate interests for example, in Banaba their traditional food is no longer there because the whole place is dug out, similarly Nauru and Bikini Atoll suffered too. I did not see any birds on all the islands. How did the old people create their songs, and melodies? It was from the birds. Our people lived on fish, but drift netting and other kinds of fishing for consumerism purposes has now taken almost all the fish away. Those of you who swim in lagoons, you hardly see anything, no small fish, and the corals are dead because of over fishing.

Local culture and traditional values have been eroded. When I was a schoolboy back in the 60's the word 'subsistence' was a very bad word. The word means you plant and harvest in this part of the land and then leave it fallow for one year and go to another bit of land. Later come back and work on the land that was left fallow. You plant only to feed the family. To students in those days it is a bad word. But my forefathers and foremothers were taught this rotation system. I hope this word is becoming a good word again today because it is a sustainable kind of agriculture. We need this more than the commercial or corporate farming that rules in the world today. Commercial farming in Fiji needs the manure to make the soil fertile every year. The manure used in Fiji is brought from Kiribati or Nauru, but after a while the land is no longer as good as it was before. It is over commercialised.

An idiom I learned as a child went *Vunibaka ga sa tevoro*, where there is a rain tree there is God. *Tevoro* means a god or demon. In Fijian language there is no word for demon, it is 'god.' Where there is rain tree there is god. Every tree has a god. Every tree is sacred. This is part of the culture. But in all our islands, these trees are being lumbered for commercial interests; they cut all the trees to build houses in Tokyo, London or elsewhere. Those trees have the totem, the sacredness and they are gone. We have lost that culture and identity with the trees and gods, the *kalou-vu* or the old gods. Commercial interests and the dollar bills are more important than cultural sacredness and identity.

Globalization encourages a promotion of the **market value of individualism**. We don't do this in the Pacific. When we go fishing we don't go alone. We cut the leaves of the coconut trees and make them into a long strings, and go into the sea in a large circle, from the seashore out into the deep water. Hundreds of people would catch the fish in a circle; a co-operative effort for the whole community and it is a festivity. The fish are gathered together, and they are shared among the people. There is no competition, but with the promotion of market value of individualism, there is consumerism and competition. Even today in the villages you now have to buy fish, there is competition now in the village. It has become part of our life.

Cultural homogenization – a melting pot because of the effect of globalisation. Education contributes to this. Information technology that has impacted on the lives of the people, we are in a melting pot and losing our own identity as a people. We become one. I don't know whether it is a good or bad thing. As for me I want to treasure my own identity and culture as a Fijian. A problem of cultural homogenization is loss of local language, which is a fear in some small countries like Fiji, Tonga, etc. What do you teach your children? Do they call you *mummy* and *daddy*, rather than the vernacular words? We don't use our Maori or Fijian or Tongan language, we use English language as though it is God's language! In Fiji we have 300,000 Fijians, if we lose our language we cannot get it back, it is gone forever. The Maoris in New Zealand almost lost their language but are beginning to bring it back. Is it happening in your islands, that you are learning French or English rather than your indigenous language

because of globalisation?

Culture of peace and culture of development sometimes don't go together. Culture of peace is a culture in which we want to live peacefully together as one people, one nation. Development brings in other aspects from outside. But I hope that this culture of peace should not be used as a pretext as resisting calls for democracy and human rights. Sometimes this is true in Fiji. At the same time, when I promote indigenous rights, I want to promote the human rights: that is important for me. The right of all people here in this country, including Indians who are part of this country they are also Fijians. Human rights and democracy are important.

Change of culture and tradition. Information technology has affected our lives. In the past if you wrote a letter to your friend in New Zealand, you waited for 5 days (or 2 weeks by boat), expecting that a reply will come. But today, within seconds you get a reply by telephone. With e-mail you can type a question you can get the answer straight back. Information technology is so fast and it has impacted us. Some of us grew up without telephone, but some of you were born with a computer in front of you! I was about 14 years old when I first saw a car! Some of you used computers when you are 3 or 4 years old. Information technology impacts and erodes our culture. Decisions made in New York and London today affect the whole world. The kind of clothing worn in London, New York or Paris can be worn the next day in Fiji.

Cosmetics brands and music is sold everywhere. Can you find a Fijian today who keeps time with two sticks, or a *lali* (wooden bell)? Today it is computerized keyboards and guitars. The bird songs are lost because the birds are lost and our music that tunes with nature is not there. My uncle went every morning up to the bush to sit and listen to the sounds and music of the birds and then he would come home and write a song with a tune he heard from the forest. His own identity is rooted there with animals, birds forest trees. That is where his life is maintained. The music culture around the world is one of the biggest impacts on youth, not just the tune but the words.

Communication technology, who benefits? I do. I regularly receive information from Geneva! But we are small pawns. The Kings and the Queens are the private sectors. They own this

technology. They give us the real culture and political leverage. They hold the reins. We are only passengers. They direct us where to go. I use Hotmail. I was away only for a month but when I came back I checked with my e-mail and found they have changed the format. I was disappointed, BUT WHO AM I? They drive the car. I am only a passenger, a pawn.

Bio-diversity prospecting, that is that the rights of ownership of natural resources is an issue Pacific Islanders should be careful with. Plants like *nono* from Cook Islands, *yaqona* or *kava* in Fiji, which are used for medicine. We don't own these things. We don't own our Fijian or Tongan *tapa* designs. Any Dick, Harry or Mary can copy that without paying royalty to the designer. They never identify the ownership. There are still so many loopholes in the legal systems that have been put in place recently.

Education: we have no choice at all in the kind of education we have, what we learn at school. The kind of education we are given is not our choice but the choice of the rich, and designed to suit them. Education takes into account a broader political and economic contexts. This is the kind of education we are taught. I was taught that subsistence is a bad word. I was brainwashed. We experienced that our education divides us because education is like a pyramid. We start off with 40 students, but at the end of primary school only 5 top students are still in school. Where are the rest? Gone. In traditional village education everybody is educated, no one is left out. Education has given us our own identity sometimes, but if it leads to marginalizing people, as is happening today, that is not the kind of education that the world should accept because it destroys humanity itself. People are categorized. Some are workers; some are bosses, etc. We lose the dignity – the 'I Thou' relationship of Martin Buber, we are all equal, we are all sacred, not things, but people. Our focus on the human person is important. The kind of education that we need today is to develop critical awareness, consciousness; Paulo Freire used the word 'conscientization.' We need to develop conscientization rather than today's system of education for globalisation. We need education for liberation. Our universities should be centres not only for acquiring specialized skills and research; they should be centres for stimulating sense of curiosity about the meaning

of life.

The export and import of cultures. North America exports TV programmes. Oprah and many TV programmes from Australia, America, Europe, etc., TV is deeper than you realize now. It is really affecting your being, your culture, the tradition and ethos of people where they are. TV affects us more than those who colonized our countries, more than imperialism, more than tourism. Nowadays videos are in the villages where there are no roads, no electricity. But they buy small generator and plug in the TV and play the American movie videos: children's movies, cartoons, violent cartoons are shown to kids. Today when our kids wake up in the morning they say "Daddy, I want a chocolate." When I woke up, it was "Daddy can I have a piece of cassava, taro, yam."

In the Pacific we want to look at an alternative. What can we in the Pacific bring to the world? What things do we still have, still treasure, and see in our own culture and values? We can still see the boundaries of our villages, the chief's house and the houses of the people surrounding it. We can still see that and treasure it. The tidal waves are coming and eroding our vanua. Can we clear the flotsam and jetsam; can the tidal wave take them away from us? We pick some of these things, and build them into an Island of Hope. We are hoping to rebuild and regain some of these traditional values, cultures, things that are there that are sustainable, things we can equate with the Kingdom of God to build up this island of hope. Identifying these values, we can begin a process of trying to build and counter the tyranny of globalisation like the tidal waves that are sweeping our shores. The biblical stories of Dives and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-30, and the rich young man of Luke 18:18-23 discuss the importance of simple sharing of the rich to the poor.

I have listed above a number of areas in the Pacific that the tidal waves of globalisation have swept away:

- Land;
- Migration and uprooting of people;
- Local cultures and tradition erosion;
- Market value of individualism;
- Cultural homogenization;
- Culture of peace and culture of development;

- Change of culture and tradition;
- Communication technology;
- Bio-diversity prospecting;
- Education;
- The export and import of cultures.

We have established the centrality of the *fenua*, *vanua*, *fonua*, *enua* etc., in the life of the Pacific people. The tyrannical forces of globalisation have destroyed aspects of the *vanua*, and one of these important tenets is 'sharing'. The two biblical stories in Luke 16:19-31, and Luke 18:18-23, can be summarized as the consequence of not sharing is utterly severe. One of the problems we have is that globalisation has stolen and deprived us of becoming a sharing community.

Questions for Bible Study II

1. Yesterday we found out that a characteristic of the first Christian community is "sharing." Discuss the '*maneaba*' concept of sharing [or other Pacific symbols of sharing mentioned or any other that you want to share] and look at it in the light of its focus on human being, human responsibility, stewardship, human right and equal citizenship.
2. In our draft paper on Pacific Alternatives to Globalisation, we wanted to promote a "**human-centred** paradigm. The *fenua*, *fanua*, *henua*/ *hanua* and *vanua* concept which embraces flora and fauna, the sea and the people is more than human centred, and so it warrants a paradigm shift, that is from human centred to **life-centred**
3. In your group discuss both positive values that help built up the Island of Hope and negative values that encourage globalisation.
4. How can the marginalized of our society be given a proper status in society and the world? Do we have an answer in the Pacific?

Bible Study III

Island of Hope, A Prophetic Community

Reading: Acts 2: 41-47

Small Pacific Islands Solidarity¹

The Qumran community was a pocket of responsible people forced to look for an alternative way of life surrounded by the outside tyrannical forces of globalization. The community could not withstand the onslaught of outside forces, and so it met its death. It has now become history. The Jesus movement then became a renewal movement with similar principles as the Qumran community. The community discussed by Luke in Acts 2:41-47 is one of the first communities established against the outside mega forces of the world. The Acts of the Apostles itself records other Jesus communities mushrooming all over as the result of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost and the movements of early believers. Small communities then developed elsewhere and some of these are evident in Paul's missionary journeys. No longer were they overpowered by the outside forces because the more the believers were persecuted, the more they determined to spread the movement and continued to grow in numbers.

More importantly, the numerical growth was engineered and influenced by the principles and values propagated by the convincing believers. It was the efforts of these small bands of people that grew into a big community, the community of believers.

Pacific Islands are just dots in the vast ocean of the Pacific, trying to live alongside the mega powers of the world. Each Pacific island cannot act alone but work together as partners. They need a concerted effort by bringing together the small positive concepts of their own communities and share them as catalysts in our political, economic, religious systems and the environment. Leaving aside the negative aspects of smallness, the other side of smallness is important and beautiful. The Bible (both the Old and the New Testaments) uses the concept of smallness to beget big things. For example, out of two persons, Sarah and Abraham, a nation was born; out of the Israelites Moses was chosen to liberate God's people; and out of Palestine, God incarnated Himself in a small baby boy to be the light to Israel and to bring salvation to the world.

Jesus cited a number of parables, which used the "smallness" concept. The poor widow's only small coin, given wholeheartedly, is as important as those who put in great amounts. One's faith in God is like a small mustard seed, which later grows into a big tree where birds of heaven come to rest. Any great thing in life must always begin with the smallest beginning. Schumacher in his book, **Small is Beautiful**, commented:

Our scientists incessantly tell us with the utmost assurance that everything around us has evolved by small mutations sieved out through natural selection.²

Schumacher is also correct when he says, "Even the Almighty is not credited with having been able to create anything complex"³ Therefore, human beings cannot create complex things at one throw. Human beings have to go through a process, beginning with the small, to be able to create the important, the significant, the beautiful and the complex.

Pacific islanders have only one way to begin, the natural way, the Pacific way, that is to begin with the small. In any Pacific village, whenever the elders open or close community meetings they utter a

few words of encouragement. One of these basic community philosophies is, "United we stand and divided we fall." Or, "Bend one reed [stick] and it will break, but put ten together and it will be difficult to break."

Those ancient words are very true. When considering partnership, sharing and service in solidarity, even our small islands, working together in unity, will create unthinkable potential power to assert their common identity and place in the competitive world of today. Jesus' prayer, "...that they may be one as we are one..." [John 17:11] is an invitation to partnership, to oneness in unity and solidarity of sharing and service, to promote the Gospel of Christ and maintain our prophetic role amidst injustices in the Pacific and in the world.

Partnership, an important concept of community living, means a call for total liberation, a profound transformation, a redefinition of basic community ethos that will radically and qualitatively change the conditions which are now experienced by the new Pacific Islanders. The concept of dependency and the revolving of life in a vicious circle of submissiveness have become 'myth-ified' and unbreakable. The way out, or a process of demythologising, is through the concept of "partnership in smallness". When the Lilliputians⁴ found Gulliver on their shores, they did not even try to manhandle the giant alone. Instead, the small people got together, thought of a smart plan of "partnership in smallness," and then put it into action. Little by little, in their Lilliputian way, and working together in partnership they overpowered the giant.

D. T. Niles once said, "A beggar telling another beggar where to find bread"⁵ is a good way of defining a search for genuine partnership. It is the Lilliputian way of subduing the giant, making the giant a partner, thus enhancing liberation for the people and the community. It is the way for the Pacific communities getting together and living and experiencing partnership as a way of educating their people and perpetuating this important aspect of their life.

The basis of partnership is the willingness of a Christian to become a partner in an I-Thou⁶ relationship, and to become a servant. God in Christ was able to dialogue with the world because the word "became flesh and dwell among us". Paul in his letter to the Philippians said, I could leave this life and be with Christ which is a far better

thing”, that is, he could be concerned with his own life to go on to heaven but stayed on and was in partnership with the people and forgot the serenity and comfort of the life with Christ. Now for the time being he was a partner and a servant of the people.

To become servants for the other people in the community is a temporary inequality. This is to say that we do not belong to ourselves but we belong to the community. Each one of us is a part of the community and whatever one possesses is not his/hers but the community's. This is the very concept of Easter, the self-denial of life and the sharing of life. For Christ lived for others and died for others. This concept is very much related to the integration of the secular and the spirituality in the Pacific worldview. The deacon [servant] or deaconess [woman servant] in his or her engagement as partners in mission in daily life continues to interpret the faith and this process becomes relevant in the act of service within the life of the community, the church, and other non-church activities.

The commitment of people as partners to service and sharing in the community is out of their belief that God has genuinely called them to these different services and ministries. The people are servants of the community, chiefs are servants of the people, and people are servants of the chiefs and those in leaderships, including church ministers or clergymen and women are the servants of the community of believers, the church. They are all partners in the community serving each other for the betterment of the community. The future is clear: in the Pacific it is rediscovering our past and the utilisation of those tenets for the development of the community of faith. The society needs partnership because more and more human being cannot live alone, for we are meant to be in partnership with one another. We will always look to God the perfect Trinitarian partners and we are always being challenged to become co-partners with God.

One of the characteristics of the first Christian community is that things were happening. They did expect great things from God and they participated in attempting great things for God. Many things happened when God and the people together made them happen. “And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved” is a clear indication that it was a “doing community” active in socio- economic changes, socio-political changes, socio-

ecological changes and socio-cultural changes. They had 'soiled hands' because they were personally engaged, and co-operatively engaged to improve the lives of human beings. They were not only cogs in the wheels of productivity and received social benefits, they were also participants in their own developments.

The Island of Hope is prophetic, a community that must take up the role as heir to the prophetic witness. It is a doing community with special function to witness, educate, serve and act in the name of God for the sustainable human development. The Island of Hope must be prepared to encounter unpleasant and un-welcomed oppositions: it is an integral part of the prophetic mission.

Questions for Bible Study III

1. Is it our prophetic role to be in solidarity with others in fighting for the cancellation of foreign debts, fighting against WTO policy, etc.?
2. We cannot do this as individual island nation or community, we are only small islands but we must add our resources together and together in solidarity tame the giant so we together and the giant can work together in partnership for our sustainability. How do we come together to tackle the giant?
3. How do we resist free trade that exploits our community?

Notes

- 1 Jovili I Meo, "Smallness and Solidarity" in *Pacific Journal of Theology*, Series II No.6 1991
- 2 E. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful*, [Continuum, 1975], 157
- 3 Schumacher, p. 157
- 4 Swift, *Gulliver's Travel*, 1926
- 5 D.T. Niles, *That they May have Life*, [New York, Harper, 1964] p.96
- 6 Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, New York, Charles Scribner's Son, 1958.

Participants' List

Rev. Dr Robert Aboagye-Mensah
General Secretary
Christian Council of Ghana
P.O. Box 919
Accra
GHANA
Tel: 233 21 774097
Mobile: 233 21 405387
E-mail: ccg@africaonline.com.gh

Dr Agnes ABUOM
BEACON
P.O. Box 47596
Nairobi
KENYA
Tel: 254 2 712 700
Fax: 254 2 71 32 81
E-mail: beacon@africaonline.co.ke

Ulamila Baleisasa
Officer
The Salvation Army
PO Box 14412
Suva
FIJI
Telephone (679) 315 177
Fax (679) 303 112
E-mail:
ulamila_baleisasa@nzf.salvationarmy.org

Fr Kevin Barr
Ecumenical Centre for Research,
Education & Advocacy
P.O. Box 2300 Govt Buildings
Suva

FIJI
Tel: 679-307588
Fax: 679 – 311248
E-mail: fccgroup@is.com.fj

Mr Betero Bebia
Assistant Coordinator YESS
Kiribati Protestant Church
KPC Headquarters Antebuka
PO Box 80
Tarawa, Bairiki
KIRIBATI
Tel: 686-21 195/ 22 149

Fr Vsevolod Chaplin
Russian Orthodox Church, DECR
Danilovsky Val 22
113 191 Moscow
RUSSIA

Tel: 7 095 955 6752 / 952 2027
Fax: 7 095 230 2619 / 2439
E-mail: fchaplin@mospat.dol.ru

Mr Jacques-Chai Chomthongdi
Focus on the Global South
C/o CUSRI
Chulalongkorn U.
Bangkok 10330
THAILAND
Tel: 662-2187363
Fax: 662-2559976
E-mail: Jacques-Chai@focusweb.org

Mr Lawrence S. Cumming
27 Fairbairn Avenue
Ottawa
Ontario
CANADA K1S 1T2
Tel:/Fax: 613-730-1341
E-mail: lcumming@web.ca

Ms Patrina Dumaru
Pacific Concerns Resource Centre
Private Mail Bag
Suva
FIJI
Tel: 304 649
Fax: 304 755
E-mail: pdumaru@pcrc.org.fj

Ms Marianne Flores
Secretary and Animator
B.P. 3994
Papeete
Tahiti
FRENCH POLYNESIA
Tel: 689-74 30 27 / 46 06 80
Fax: 46 06 80

Fr Line Folaumoeloa
P.O. Box 1
Nuku'alofa
TONGA
Tel: 676 23 822
Fax: 676 23 854

Mr Raju Fong
Pacific Conference of Churches
Finance Office
P.O. Box 208
Suva
FIJI
Tel: 679-311277 / 302332
Fax: 679-303205
E-mail: pacific@is.com.fj

Mrs Salamo Fulivai
Director
Pacific Foundation for the Ad-
vancement of Women (PacFAW)
P.O. Box 3940
Suva
FIJI
Tel: 679-301 352 / 304961
Fax: 679- 301 222
E-mail: pacfaw@is.com.fj

Rev. Juan Gattinoni
CLAI
Latin American Council of
Churches
J.B. Alberti 2240
CP 1416 Buenos Aires
ARGENTINA
Tel: 5411 – 4612 – 3693
Fax: 5411 – 4613 – 4992
E-mail: hansy@clairp.com.ar

Dr Ruth Gütter
Queralle 50
34119 Kassel
GERMANY
Tel: 0561/77 60 63
Fax: 0561/71 18 09
E-mail: r.guetter@gmx.de
And: oweks@ekkw.de

Ms Linn Aas-Hansen
Changemaker
Norwegian Church Aid
Sandakervein 67D
N-0477 Oslo
NORWAY
Tel: 0047 22 09 27 23
Fax: 47 22 09 27 20
E-mail: lah@nca.no

Ms Davina Hosking
Cook Islands Christian Church
PO Box 874
Rarotonga
COOK ISLANDS
Tel: 682- 20 395
E-mail: davina@oyster.net.ck

Mr Taholo Kami
Consultant
Catalina St.
Suva Point
Suva
FIJI
Tel/Fax: 679 – 302 607
SUVA

Rev. Freddy Knutsen
World Council of Churches
Programme Executive Youth
150, route de Ferney
PO Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2
SWITZERLAND
Tel: 41 22 791 6030
Fax: 41 22 791 64 09
E-mail: frk@wcc-coe.org

Mr Tex-Paul Adzor Koku
All Africa Conference of Churches
AACC - Youth Desk
P.O. Box 14205 Nairobi
KENYA
Tel: 254 2 441338
Fax: 254 2 443241
E-mail: youth@aacc-ceta.org

Rev. Marta Kovacs
Rev. Márta Kovácsné Tóth
H-9516 Vonock
József A. utca 10
HUNGARY
Tel: 36 95 485 047
E-mail: toth.marta@dpg.hu

Ms Lusia Lalabalavu
Pacific Conference of Churches
Administration Office
P.O. Box 208
Suva
FIJI
Tel: 679-311277 / 302332
Fax: 679-303205
E-mail: pacific@is.com.fj

Mr Augusto Kelly Lawig
National Council of Churches in
the Philippines
879, EDSA, Quezon City 1099
PHILIPPINES
Tel: 632 9269760
Fax: 632 9267076
E-mail:
youthdesk@foreveryoung.ph

Dr Christopher Lind
President,
St Andrew's College and St
Stephen's College
1121 College Dr.
Saskatoon, SK
CANADA S7N 0W3
Tel: 1 306 966 8975
Fax: 1 306 966 8981
E-mail: lind@sask.usask.ca

Ms Fonofonosefulu Margaret-
Maria Maene
National Council of Churches in
American Samoa
3349 Nuuli Village
Pago Pago
AMERICAN SAMOA 96799
Tel: 684-699 2050
Tel: 684-733 5490
Fax: 684-699 8380
E-mail: rettemae@hotmail.com

Bishop Bernardino Mandlate
54 Hardinge Road
London NW 10 3PJ
ENGLAND
Tel: 44 20 8459 2241
E-mail: dino@mandlate.fsnet.co.uk

Dr Jack Menke
Prins Hendrikstraat 38
Paramaribo
SURINAME
Tel: 597 475 232
Fax: 597-422-195
E-mail: jmen@sr.net

Rev.Dr Jovili Meo
Principal
Pacific Theological College
Private Mail Bag
Suva
FIJI
Tel: 679-302419 / 311100
Fax: 679-301728
E-mail: jmeo@ptcac.fj

Lic. Horacio Mesones
Regional Secretary
FUMEC ALC-WSCF LAC
Pablo Suárez E6-15 P.2
ECUADOR
Tel/Fax: 00593 2 23 8912
E-mail: fumec@andinanet.net

Dr Rogate Mshana
Programme Executive
Economic Justice
Justice, Peace and Creation
World Council of Churches
150, route de Ferney
PO Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland
Tel: 41 22 791 6031
Fax: 41 22 791 64 09
E-mail: rrm@wcc-coe.org

Rev. Dr Fidon Mwombeki
Evangelical Lutheran Church in
Tanzania
P.O. Box 98
Bukoba
TANZANIA
Tel: 255 28 2221 313
Fax: 255 28 22 20954
E-mail: elct-nwd@twiga.com

Rev. Baiteke Nabetari
Moderator
Kiribati Protestant Church
P.O. Box 80, Bairiki, Antebuka
Tarawa
REPUBLIC OF KIRIBATI
Tel: 686-21195
Fax: 686-21453
E-mail: kpc@tskl.ki

Prof. M.Abraham. Oommen
Institute of Social Sciences
B-7/18 Safdarjung Enclave
New Delhi 110 029
INDIA
Tel:91-471-438505
Fax: 91 11 6137027
E-mail: maoommen@hotmail.com
Or iss@nda.vsnl.net.in

Rev. Valamotu Palu
General Secretary
Pacific Conference of Churches
P.O. Box 208
Suva
FIJI
Tel: 679-311277 / 302332
Fax: 679-303205
E-mail: pacific@is.com.fj

Prof. Kyung Mi Park
Department of Christian Studies
Ewha Women's University
11-1 Dae Hyun Dong
Seo Dae Man Ku
Seoul
KOREA
Tel. 82-2-3277-3444
Fax:82-2-3277-2197
E-mail: kmpark@mm.ewha.ac.kr

Rev. S.W. Park
World Alliance of Reformed
Churches (WARC)
150, route de Ferney
PO Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2
SWITZERLAND
Tel: 41 22 791 6236
Fax:41 22 791 6505
E-mail: swp@warc.ch

Mr Peter Pavlovic
Study Secretary
Conference of European Churches
Ecumenical Centre
Rue Joseph II, 174
B-1000 Brussels
BELGIUM
Tel: 32 2 234 68 33
E-mail: ppt@cec-kek.be

Mr Makoni Pulu
Pacific Conference of Churches
P.O. Box 208
Suva
FIJI
Tel: 679-311277 / 302332
Fax: 679-303205
E-mail: pacific@is.com.fj

Pasteure Rafaëlle Quinche
Bancherie 26
1022 Chavannes
SUISSE
Tel/fax: 21 – 634 44 72
E-mail: ruth-helene.quinche@freesurf.ch

Mr Angel Luis Rivera
CLAI
Latin American Council of
Churches
Apartado 17-08-8522
Quito
ECUADOR
Te/Fax: 00593 2 553996
E-mail: angeluis@clai.org.ec

Rev. Dr. Martin Robra
Programme Executive
Justice, Peace and Creation
World Council of Churches
150, route de Ferney

PO Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2
SWITZERLAND
Tel: 41 22 791 6029
Fax: 41 22 791 64 09
E-mail: mro@wcc-coe.org

Mr John Rofeta
Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA)
P.O. Box 1335
Honiara
SOLOMON ISLANDS
Tel: 677 – 233 50
E-mail:
vepsic@welkam.solomon.com.sb

Rev. Dr. Sekuini Seva'aetasi
General Secretary
NCC American Samoa
P.O. Box 921, Pago Pago
AMERICAN SAMOA 96799
Tel: 684-699 9809 / 9810
Fax: 684-699 4828
E-mail:

Fr. Gabriel Sharma
Anglican Church
P.O. Box 117
Lautoka
FIJI ISLANDS
Tel/Fax: 679-660124
E-mail: gabsharma@yahoo.com

Mr Peter Saroya
PNG Council of Churches
P.O. Box 1015, Boroko
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
Tel: 675 325 9961
Fax: 675 325 1206

Rev. Bob Scott
Programme Executive
Justice, Peace and Creation
150, route de Ferney
World Council of Churches
PO Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2
SWITZERLAND
Tel: 41 22 791 6166
Fax: 41 22 791
E-mail: bob@wcc-coe.org

Ms Morven Sidal
Conference Minutes Reporter
P.O. Box 15674
Suva
FIJI
Tel/Fax: 679-479 375
E-mail: sidal@is.com.fj

Mr Savenaca Siwatibau
Vice Chancellor
University of the South Pacific
P.O. Box 1168
Suva
FIJI
Tel: 313 900 Ext. 23/3
Fax: 302 556
E-mail: siwatibau_s@usp.ac.fj

Rev. Bertalan Tamás
Abonyi u.21
1146 Budapest
HUNGARY
Tel 36 1 460 07 09
Fax: 36 1 460 07 08
E-mail: zsinatko@matavnet.hu